KATHERINE MAYO AND INDIA

KATHERINE MAYO AND INDIA

By

Manoranjan Jha



PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE
NEW DELHI AHMEDABAD BOMBAY

August 1971

Printed by D. P. Sinha at the New Age Printing Press, Rani Jhansi Road and published by him for the People's Publishing House, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi-55.

DEDICATION

To

Those Americans who, despite Katherine Mayo and persons of her ilk, stood by the cause of Indian nationalism.

FOREWORD

The publication by Katherine Mayo of *Mother India* in 1927 was at the time a cause celebre. On the eve of the announcement of the all-white composition of the Simon Commission, the *Raj* and Indian nationalist forces were preparing for a fresh trial of strength. Just then was published this book, seeking to show, with lurid detail, that India's social backwardness rendered her unfit for freedom. Had Miss Mayo been detached observer who had only written what she genuinely believed, and had her conclusions, however wrong, been honestly reached, most Indians would not have minded. But it was generally suspected that her book had been officially inspired and was no more than official propaganda.

Dr Jha has now, with extensive quotations from the papers of Miss Mayo and the official archives, established that Miss Mayo was not interested in social reform but in denigrating the Indian people, and that in this she had the enthusiastic cooperation of many senior officials in London and India. This little book is a neat and convincing addition to our knowledge of this period.

Oxford
13 July 1970

S. Gopal

PREFACE

Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* had created a sensation in the English-speaking world when it came out in the summer of 1927. Mahatma Gandhi called it "A Drain Inspector's Report", and was disappointed that an American lady should have given such a distorted picture of the Indian life. He despatched his trusted friend and colleague Mrs Sarojini Naidu to the USA to undo the effect of *Mother India* on the mind of the Americans. Yet for a pretty long time *Mother India* remained a book of common reference among educated people and a source for all those who wanted to tarnish the image of India.

In the present work, I have gone behind the publication and sought to know what led Katherine Mayo to write this book and which were the sources she drew inspiration and support from. I have also taken into consideration Mayo's other works and activities relating to India. In all this, I have primarily based myself upon the private papers of Katherine Mayo lodged in the Historical and Manuscript Division of the Yale University Library in the USA. I am deeply grateful to the authorities of the Yale University Library for the kind and enthusiastic help offered to me in my research. I am also grateful to the authorities of the India Office and Public Record Office in London and the National Archives in New Delhi for giving me access to some of the official unpublished records in their custody relevant to my work. I only regret that when I was in London during April-June 1966, the records in the India Office and Public Record Office were open only for the period up to 1922. Shortly after that the records for the subsequent years were open but I could not avail myself of the opportunity thus available. I tried to fill up the gap in the National Archives in New Delhi but to my disappointment I found that while I could lay my hands on

some of the relevant files, some others were not available as they were "not transferred" to the Archives.

The present work is a slightly modified version of the monograph I had submitted to the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi, in 1969. When I was a Research Fellow at the School, I worked on Mayo's interest in India and the monograph was a fruit of that research. I express my deep sense of gratitude to the School and its the then Director, Dr M. S. Rajan, for fully sponsoring and financing this project. And I do not find adequate words to express my obligation to Prof M. S. Venkataramani, the Head of the Department of American Studies of the School, who as an ideal teacher guided my work and as a genuine well-wisher gave me full support and cooperation. My heartfelt thanks to him. I am thankful to Shri A. S. Hebbar of the School for having gone through the manuscript of the monograph. I am also thankful to Dr Tara Bhushan Mukherji, the Vice-Chancellor of the Bihar University, for giving some financial aid towards meeting the typing charges of the press copy of the manuscript.

Finally, I am grateful to Dr S. Gopal, now Professor of Contemporary History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for writing a Foreword to this study.

I am, of course, solely responsible for any error of fact or judgment.

Banaras Hindu University,
Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)

MANORANJAN JHA

CONTENTS

Chapter One

THE BACKGROUND

THE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN OPINION

Ever since the thirteen colonies of America broke away from the mighty British empire, public men and authorities in Great Britain had been wary of the possibility of American attitude towards British rule in India turning hostile. As early as February 1782, an anonymous "Well-wisher of the East India Company" had warned the Company against allowing the American traders to land in India. Foreboding doom, he had written:

> ...I am certain from what I have seen of the Americans that the suffering them to mix with your own Servants will (if possible) contaminate them more to your prejudice—but to send them amongst the quiet Gentoo Natives of Indostan, whom I have also seen, I can only compare to the Devil sowing the Tares amongst the Wheat.[1]

Similar were the apprehensions of George Baldwin, British Consul in Egypt. Writing in 1785, he had warned that America was ever anxious to promote defection of the British settlements in the East Indies:

> When I said that the independency of America, or even an unrestricted trade allowed to them, was pregnant with mischiefs to England, I confess that I suspected from the

[1] Anonymous letter, February 1782, Home Miscellaneous Series, vol. 605, India Office, London, quoted in Holden Furber, "The Beginning of American Trade with India", *New England Quarterly* (Baltimore, Md), vol. 11, June 1938, pp. 238-39.

> least of them almost unavoidable perdition to our settlements in the East Indies...[2]

This wariness on the part of British authorities was not really necessary at first, for Indian nationalism did not acquire a definite shape and direction till after the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The British government in India faced the first wave of militant nationalism during 1903-5 in the wake of the partition of Bengal. During this period William Jennings Bryan, one of the topmost figures on the American political scene and twice the Presidential candidate of the Democratic Party, visited India and obtained first-hand knowledge of the "jewel" of the British empire. The sombre verdict of this important American on the British administration of India was:

> Let no one cite India as an argument in defense of colonialism. On the Ganges and the Indus the Briton, in spite of his many notable qualities and his large contribution to the world's advancement, has demonstrated, as many have before, man's inability to exercise, with wisdom and justice, irresponsible power over the helpless people. He has conferred some benefits upon India, but he has extorted a tremendous price for them. While he has boasted of bringing peace to the living, he has led millions to the peace of the grave; while he has dwelt upon order established between warring tribes, he has impoverished the country by legalized pillage.[3]

These remarks received wide publicity both in Britain and in the United States in the shape of a pamphlet. James Bryce, who was British Ambassador in Washington, D.C., during this very time, noted that "angry pamphlets" against British rule in India were being distributed in the United States. There were also attempts to organise on the soil of America an association to promote the cause of Indian nationalism. Bryce drew the attention of Lord Morley, then

[2] Quoted in Furber, n.1, p. 239.

[3] William Jennings Bryan, *The Old World and Its Ways* (St. Louis, 1907), p. 308.

Secretary of State for India, to these disconcerting developments.[4] This disturbed Morley's equanimity, and he apprehended that a tide of strong opinion critical of British rule in India might one day swell in the United States and "if a third Minto should be G.G. [Governor-General] he may be molested by such things". He, therefore, advised Minto:

> To cut the moral short, while sitting tight it is our business to keep our system fair, legal, constitutional, and all other things that make one sing 'Rule Britannia' with a clear conscience as well as lusty lungs.[5]

Morley did not leave the matter at that. He expressed his concern to the American Ambassador in London and sent messages and emissaries to President Theodore Roosevelt urging him to say something in public which might offset the effect of the adverse comments being made in America on British rule in India.[6]

President Roosevelt himself was observing the Indian scene with concern. He wrote to the American Ambassador in London (Whitelaw Reid): "...I do not like what I hear about India. It looks to me as if a very ugly feeling was growing up there. How do the British authorities feel about it? Are they confident that they can hold down any revolt?"[7] Roosevelt believed that agitators in India and England "traded on supposed American support of the Indian agitation".[8] He, therefore, felt that it was time the British cousins should be helped. The Methodist missionary workers were meeting in Washington on 18 January 1909. The President addressed the meeting and paid tribute to the British administration in India in glowing terms:

[4] Morley to Minto, 27 February 1908, *Letters to Earl of Minto*, vol. 3, India Office, London.

[5] Morley to Minto, 23 April 1908, *ibid.*

[6] Roosevelt to Sydney Brooks, 28 December 1908. Elting E. Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), vol. 6, p. 1443. Sydney Brooks, a British journalist, acted as one of Morley's emissaries to Roosevelt.

[7] Roosevelt to Whitelaw Reid, 26 November 1908, *ibid*, pp. 1383-84.

[8] Morison, n.6, p. 1507.

> It is the greatest feat of the kind that has been performed since the break-up of the Roman Empire... It is easy enough to point out the shortcomings, but the fact remains that the successful administration of the Indian Empire by the English has been one of the most notable and the most admirable achievements of the white race during the past centuries.[9]

The British authorities were naturally very pleased at the President's performance. As Sydney Brooks wrote later, England very much cared to know what views the Americans held about British rule in India, and so this "magnificent eulogy" had filled "the cup of the British satisfaction almost to overflowing".[10]

The First World War provided an opportunity to the Indian revolutionaries and nationalists to arouse American sympathy in their favour. The Hindustan Ghadr Party was already formed in 1913 with headquarters at San Francisco. Lala Lajpat Rai reached the United States in 1914 and established contacts with American journalists, publishers, intellectuals and important public figures so as to educate American opinion with regard to India's demand for self-rule.[11] Attempts were also made by some Indians in the United States to tranship arms and ammunition to India for possible use in an armed revolt against the British. This, however, proved abortive.[12]

From India, too, attempts were made to establish contacts

[9] *Some American Opinions on the British Empire,* (London. n.d.), pp. 1-2.

[10] Sydney Brooks. "American Opinion and British Rule in India". *North American Review* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 190, December 1909, pp. 773-74.

[11] For an account of Lajpat Rai's activities in the United States. see "Recollections of His Life and Work for an Independent India While Living in the United States and Japan. 1914-1917", Microfilm. National Archives of India, New Delhi. This is a memorandum written by Lajpat Rai himself.

[12] For the full story, see Giles Tyler Brown, "The Hindu Conspiracy Case and the Neutrality of the United States, 1914-1917", Thesis, M.A., University of California, 1937.

with prominent Americans. President Wilson, while elaborating on the war-aims, declared on 2 April 1917 that the right of self-determination for all peoples was an imperative principle which statesmen would henceforth ignore at their peril. This was noted in India. Subramaniya Iyer, ex-Chief Justice of the High Court of Madras and Honorary President of the Home Rule League of India, in a letter sent through his two theosophist American friends (Mr and Mrs Henry Hotchner) to avoid interception by the British authorities, congratulated the President on his forthright stand and appealed to him in a tone charged with emotion: "Honoured Sir, the aching heart of India cries out to you, whom we believe to be an incarnation of God in the reconstruction of the World." Subramaniya Iyer assured the President that if self-government at an early date was promised, India would offer at least ten million men within six months to fight on behalf of the Allies in the war.[13] The British authorities came to know that such a letter had been addressed to the American President. Moreover, consequent upon the publication of this letter in some American newspapers, the theosophist groups in the United States had become active on behalf of India. All this made the British authorities anxious.[14] Through the British Bureau of Information in New York they tried their best to undo the effect of the activities of these groups.[15]

The British authorities were also perturbed over the possibility of the Indians trying to influence the peace proposals emanating from America, their anxiety on this score having

[13] Full text of the letter in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9 May 1918, p. 3. The letter is dated 24 June 1917.

[14] V.G.W.Kell, Military Intelligence, War Office, London, to J.W. Hose, India Office, London, 12 December 1917. F.O. 317/3069 of 1917, Public Record Office, London.

[15] See India Office communication to the Foreign Office, J. and P. (Secret) 1847, 28 November 1917. F.O. 317/3069 of 1917, Public Record Office, London. See also Ronald F. Roxburgh, Department of Information, Foreign Office, to Geoffrey Butler, Director, British Bureau of Information in New York, N.Y., 12 December 1917. F.O. 395/86 of 1917, Public Record Office, London.

been accentuated by the well-known attitude of President Wilson on the question of the right of self-determination. They noted that David Starr Jordan, Professor at the University of Stanford, California, and a prominent figure in the American peace movements, was going on a tour of Europe and he was likely to be accompanied by Dhan Gopal Mukerji, an Indian student in the United States. Sensing some trouble, the British Foreign Office immediately advised the British Ambassador in Washington to refuse to issue a passport to Mukerji. To leave no loophole, it was arranged that if Mukerji at all left the United States, he should be arrested while travelling on the high seas.[16]

During the last days of the First World War and the first few days of the post-war period, there was a spurt in nationalist agitation in India. This had repercussions in the United States also. The India Home Rule League of America founded by Lala Lajpat Rai and the Hindustan Ghadr Party were already active. A new organisation called the Friends of Freedom for India was launched in New York in March 1919 to promote the cause of Indian nationalism in the United States. Indians such as Taraknath Das and Sailendranath Ghose and Americans such as Robert Mores Lovett, Oswald Garrison Villard and Frank P. Walsh were active members of this organisation.[17] They issued pamphlets such as *British Inquisition in India;* established an Indian News Service which supplied reports, news items, etc. to American journals and magazines; and organised public meetings to expose the repressive nature of British administration in India and mobilise American opinion in favour of the Indian nationalists. These activities made the British officers in India anxious about American opinion. Secretary to the Government of Bombay sounded a note of warning. He wrote

[16] Telegram from the Foreign Office to the British Ambassador in Washington. D.C. (Sir C. Spring Rice), 17 February 1917. F.O.371/3064 of 1917. Public Record Office, London.

[17] Robert Morss Lovett was on the Faculty of the University of Chicago. Oswald Garrison Villard was the editor of *The Nation* (New York. N.Y.). Frank P. Walsh was formerly Co-Chairman of the War Labor Board of the United States.

to the British Embassy in Washington: "...unless steps are taken to counteract this campaign of calumny and misrepresentation, the effect on American public opinion can hardly fail to be serious".[18]

This was the period when the official circles of the United States also began to take keener interest in the Indian developments. The Department of State alerted its representatives in India and asked for prompt reports:

> Please telegraph Department promptly and frequently all developments in India. Be careful to verify reports. Consult other American consulates in India as to local conditions.[19]

Later, the Department of State noted that the Muslims in India too were agitated against the British owing to the dismemberment of the Turkish empire at the end of the war and, therefore, they were cooperating with the Hindus in the nationalist movement. What worried them most was the possible connection between these movements and the Bolshevist activities in Central Asia and on the north-western frontier of India. The Department, therefore, telegraphically asked the American Consul in Calcutta:

> Forward to consuls Tiflis and Tehran: Mail report on any features of Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic movements which might affect situation in India or which are connected with Bolshevist activities in Turkestan or any other revolutionary movements in Central Asia.[20]

These turbulent developments in India were getting greater publicity in the United States than ever before. Moreover, this publicity was not necessarily always in favour of the

[18] Confidential despatch, no. S.D. 1462, Political Department, Government of Bombay, 24 December 1919. F.O. 115/2511 of 1919, Public Record Office, London.

[19] Telegram from Secretary of State to American Consul in Calcutta, 18 April 1918. 845.00/219a, Records of the Department of State relating to Internal Affairs of India, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[20] Telegram from Department of State to American Consul in Calcutta, 5 May 1920, 845.00/263a, *ibid.*

British. *The Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* of New York, for example, carried the following on 5 January 1920:

> Political and revolutionary upheavals and conflicts had taken place between natives concerned with Indian liberty and British troops who have found political meetings and gatherings an excellent rifle range in which living targets by official command of British Generals were held to the guns till ammunition was exhausted.

The advent of Gandhi on the political scene of India during this period added to the British woe. This "wisp of a man" had succeeded in moving the vast Indian masses against the mightiest empire of the world through his message of truth and nonviolence. He caught the attention of a sizable section of Americans by the new type of movement he was conducting. Thus wrote a New York journal:

> ...the revolution heretofore conducted in India is of another sort and hard to comprehend. For the keynote of that revolution, as spoken by its leader, Mohandas Gandhi, sounds as if it might have been from a new version of the Sermon on the Mount.[21]

This journal was not alone in appreciating the role of Gandhi. Important liberal organs such as *The Nation* (New York) and the *New Republic* (New York) showered praise on Gandhi and supported the nationalists. Rev. John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church in New York, went so far as to declare from his pulpit that Gandhi was the greatest man in the world. In fact, when the noncooperation movement was at its height, a number of American liberals, pacifists and public men, including some members of the US Congress, jointly proclaimed that the United States had never failed to extend support to peoples who struggled for freedom and, therefore, they would do their best to promote the success of the Indian struggle being

[21] "The Latest Thing in Revolution", *Current Opinion* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 72, April 1922, p. 445.

waged under the leadership of Gandhi.[22] *The Washington Times* went a step forward and sharply posed the question: how could the United States "consistently and conscientiously support England in her domination of India against the will of her three hundred million people"? It suggestively asked: "should we not rather scrap this unnatural allaince [with England] which stultifies all our principles of liberty and nullifies the whole inspiring spirit of our history?"[23]

It is evident that both the official and the nonofficial circles of the United States gave greater attention to the Indian developments in the post-war years than in the past. This was affecting the attitude of a section of Americans towards England. Activities of the Indians residing in the United States and their American sympathisers were an important contributory factor in this situation. America's increased commercial interest in the Indian market was another factor. This is evident from the correspondence between American Trade Commissioner in India (W. H. Rastall) and the Acting Director of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States (R. S. Mac Elwee) in 1920. Rastall had enquired whether there was any political reason for the "disproportionate" emphasis being given to the trade opportunity available in South America and China in the departmental publications and magazines. To this Elwee had replied:

> ...the Bureau does not feel that the possibilities for American trade in India should, in any way, be depreciated or made secondary to the possibilities in South America or China. It is our policy to encourage the growth of American export trade wherever it is possible to do so, and with proper facilities afforded by American ships, the desire of

[22] For the text of the statement, see *Modern Review* (Calcutta), vol. 31, February 1922, pp. 242-43.

[23] This editorial was written by William Randolph Hearst who owned a chain of newspapers in the United States. This was reproduced in *The Hindu* (Madras), 27 February 1922.

> a great many Indian firms to trade with the USA should be encouraged and satisfied.[24]

Above all, there was the charismatic personality of Gandhi who not only tremendously moved the Indian masses but also deeply appealed to the conscience of humanity with his transparent sincerity and message of truth and nonviolence in a world which had only recently experienced the hypocrisy and the horrors of a deceitful and devastating war. In fact, Gandhi attracted so much attention in the post-war years that Rushbrook Williams, who was Director of the Central Bureau of Information of the Government of India during 1920-26, admitted later:

> The attention attracted by Mr Gandhi, due to the picturesque of his activities and his personal idealism, became a distinct factor in the relationship between Britain and certain other countries—notably America.[25]

BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN THE UNITED STATES

Very early in the post-war years, the British authorities decided to take effective action to "educate" American opinion from their point of view. The British Foreign Secretary telegraphically informed the British Ambassador in Washington in December 1919 what the Government of India wanted in this connection. He told the Ambassador:

> The Government of India are anxious to counter the malicious propaganda in the US about the conditions and administration in India and suggest that a competent American journalist should be *engaged* to go to India for three months and advise as to counter-propaganda measures. They would *defray expenses* but cannot suggest a suitable individual.[26]

[24] Elwce to Rastall. 29 June 1920. 132.300, Records of the Department of Commerce (Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce). National Archives. Washington, D.C.

[25] L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *What About India?* (London. 1938), p. 176.

[26] Telegram from the Foreign Secretary (Lord Curzon) to the British Ambassador (Grey). 12 December 1919. F.O. 115/2511 of 1919, Public Record Office, London. Emphasis added.

The British Embassy promptly directed its attention towards this. One of its officers, Colonel Faunthorpe, studied the matter closely and advised that the best method of countering the anti-British propaganda in America was "to send out to India the [American] writer who commands the largest number of readers".[27] Later he suggested that several American journalists should go to India, and that they should be so selected as to represent the major areas of the United States: New York, the Midwest and California.[28] The Government of India approved this proposal and asked Faunthorpe to proceed with his negotiations with the journalists.[29] Faunthorpe promptly got in touch with prominent American journalists such as Frank Sismonds, whose articles on war and international politics were widely read throughout the United States, Roy Martin of the Associated Press and F. T. Birchall of the *New York Times*. After consultation with several American journalist friends, he reported that the Associated Press would send a representative to India if invited; so would Scripps, who controlled an important group of seventeen papers and an agency in the West. Interestingly, *he also reported that it would be advisable to include a lady journalist among the visiting American journalists.*[30] The Government of India accepted these proposals, but advised Faunthorpe to discuss them with Rushbrook Williams, who was then in the United States to examine the possibilities of providing the American public "prompt and interesting intelligence on Indian affairs".[31]

As indicated above, the Government of India was so anxi-

[27] Note by Colonel Faunthorpe to Ronald Lindsay (Counseller in the British Embassy), 16 December 1919, *ibid.*

[28] Telegram from Faunthorpe to Rushbrook Williams, Home Department, Government of India, 23 January 1920, F.O. 115/2597 of 1920, Public Record Office, London.

[29] Telegram from Rushbrook Williams to Faunthorpe, 19 February 1920, *ibid.*

[30] Telegram from British Embassy (Washington, D.C.) to the Foreign Office (London), 12 May 1920, *ibid.*

[31] J. W. Hose (India Office) to the Under Secretary of State (Foreign Office), 15 April 1920, *ibid.*

ous at this time to get "proper" publicity work done in the United States that it sent the Director of its Publicity Department there for the purpose. Rushbrook Williams reached the United States in the summer of 1920, but he could not meet Faunthorpe, who had left on some other assignment. He toured the various parts of the United States, discussed the matter with his friends in the field of journalism, in the universities and elsewhere, and prepared a comprehensive memorandum on this subject for the consideration of the Government of India. On the question of propaganda work in the United States, he summarised his operative proposals as follows:

(*a*) The invitation of American pressmen and publicists of *approved type* to visit India.

(*b*) The institution of popular lectures in America dealing with Indian matters.

(c) The enlistment of the cooperation of American universities in creating an informed opinion about India.

(*d*) The utilization of Indian films of an *approved type* to increase American interest and knowledge concerning India and her problems.[32]

Rushbrook Williams also informed the Government of India that to deal with the general problem of improving Anglo-American relations, the British Foreign Office had set up an organisation in New York with the "noncommittal title" of "The British Library of Information". He wrote: "While carefully refraining from the appearance of propaganda it invites enquiries, diffuses information, and generally stimulates interest, largely through social intercourse, in the British point of view." As officer in charge of the Special Branch of the Home Department, he fully discussed with the staff of the British Library of Information how it could be of help to the Government of India in the matter of organising publicity work in the United States. One of

[32] See Memoranda prepared by L. F. Rushbrook Williams on the education of public opinion in America and Great Britain on matters relating to India, Home Department, Poll. A. November 1920. Proceeding no. 212. National Archives of India, New Delhi. Emphasis added.

the decisions arrived at was that "an *intimate informal* connection" between the publicity officer of the Government of India and the Director of the British Library of Information should be maintained.[33]

The memorandum of Rushbrook Williams shows that efforts were made in all the four directions outlined by him to foster publicity work in the United States. Important American journalists were invited to visit India. Negotiations were opened with Professor W. B. Pitkin of Columbia, who was about to visit the Far East on behalf of the Carnegie Foundation, to extend his tour to India. Eliot Wadsworth, "a wealthy man, well-disposed towards Great Britain", who had written a good deal upon social problems and whose "testimony would carry weight with an influential section of the American public", was contacted, and this in spite of the fact that Wadsworth was on the Executive of the American Red Cross. Moreover, Talbot Mundy, who was a "writer of 'best sellers' about the East" was already on his way to India "*at Government invitation*".

For lecture work in the United States, he engaged an Indian Parsee, Rustomji Rustom. He envisaged "little difficulty in inducing" such a prominent lecturer as Charles Upson Clark to visit India and speak of his impressions of India to audiences throughout the length and breadth of America in the ensuing lecture season. "This", noted Rushbrook Williams, "would cost His Majesty's Government, altogether about $8,000, but would be money well invested, and would only represent travelling expenses and subsistence during the period Dr Clark was away from America."[34]

To enlist the cooperation of the universities, it was arranged that officers of the Indian Educational Service should serve on the faculties of the American universities. A start was made in this line with the appointment of Professor E. A. Horne of Government College, Patna, on the staff of

[33] *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
[34] *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

the Harvard University, the salary being the charge of the Government of India.[35]

Adequate attention was also directed towards increasing popular American interest in the achievements of British rule in India through cinematography. American film corporations were approached for this.[36] Moreover, an American citizen, Lowell Thomas, was given facilities, including free transport by the Indian railway companies so that he could travel throughout India and make films, for exhibition in Europe and America, on British achievements, particularly in the field of irrigation, agriculture, education and industrial progress.[37]

The foregoing paragraphs give an idea of the lines on which the British authorities exerted themselves to present their case before the American public and to offset the effect of pro-nationalist activities in the United States, which were viewed as a serious impediment in the development of cordial Anglo-American relations. But by 1922 Robert Wilberforce, Director of the British Library of Information in New York, who was also looking after the publicity work of the Government of India in the United States, began to press for more funds so that the working requirements of this work could be adequately met. In India by this time a Legislative Assembly reorganised under the Government of India Act, 1919, had come into existence. Although this had been boycotted by the nationalists, still the Indian members in the Assembly were proving recalcitrant in voting funds for propaganda work. The Indian officials concerned, therefore, wondered whether the expenses the British Library of Information had asked for "could be met from non-

[35] See Note by the Home Member. Government of India (W. H. Vincent), 7 July 1921 (this should be 1920). Also Note by the Finance Member (W. M. Hailey). 18 July 1920. Home Department, Political, Proceedings. February 1921, nos. 322-29, National Archives of India. New Delhi.

[36] Telegram from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, 14 November 1922. F.O. 395/376 of 1922. Public Record Office, London.

[37] Note by Rushbrook Williams. 5 May 1922. Home Department. Political, File no. 30/III/1922. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

votable, i.e. secret service sources".[38] The funds placed at the disposal of Rushbrook Williams or the Directorate of the Intelligence Bureau were not as large as they might have desired. But Rushbrook Williams was certain of one thing: if a method could be devised to provide funds for such purposes as propaganda, he could imagine "no object on which they could be more usefully expended" than the one proposed by the British Library of Information in New York.[39]

The records of the Government of India throw interesting light on how carefully the British officials planned their publicity work in the United States. They took great precaution to see that the work done bore no semblance of propaganda on behalf of the Government of India. It has already been noted that deliberately they gave the innocuous name of the "British Library of Information" to the organisation which was nothing but an organ of propaganda on behalf of the British in the United States. In fact, the officials of the British Embassy in Washington had very early advised the Government of India to have no separate propaganda organisation of their own inasmuch as anything coming from such an organisation would immediately be suspected of a pro-Government bias. So it was decided that propaganda work had better be done through the innocent-looking "Library of Information".[40]

This preoccupation with "tactfulness" in propaganda work is very clearly revealed in the British attempt to organise film propaganda in the United States. In 1919-20, Sir F. Popham Young who appeared to have made it his special mission in life to improve relations between England and America went to the United States. India being a handicap in this, he suggested that the American image of British rule in India could be greatly improved if irrigation projects, prosperous villages and vast stretches of wheat or cotton contrasting with the previous barrenness and poverty of the rural areas

[38] *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] See memoranda by Rushbrook Williams, n. 32.

could be shown to the Americans through motion pictures. But he did not fail to add a precautionary note:

> Obviously, tact and discretion will be required to convey exactly what we want to convey. No beating of the big drum! Facts with the underlying moral often blunderingly, often on the wrong trail, but always with a purpose behind, making for the freedom of the world. The central idea will be that, 'when you come right down to it', the same ideals actuate the British and American peoples.[41]

The Government of India responded positively to the proposal. After carefully considering the pros and cons of Young's proposals, it agreed to advance money to some reputable American firms to produce films on India and to distribute them in America. As regards the character of the films, the British officials in New York suggested that these should show that the Indian people had ready access to justice, as well as equality of opportunity in trade and commerce. But the British did not propose to show their hand even to their American cousins. An officer, A. Fletcher, very cunningly advised:

> The latter (American film producers) should be kept in ignorance, if possible, of the object (of the propaganda) so far as this country is concerned, except that he might, as part of the arrangement, receive the American rights of the films.[42]

The British officers tried to keep even the US Department of State in the dark as to the nature of their propaganda arrangements. We have already pointed out how the Harvard University had been persuaded to appoint Professor E. Horne on its staff. Just to make sure that the Department of State did not take exception to it, the officials of the British

[41] F. Popham Young to the Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., 23 May 1920. F.O. 115/2597 of 1920, Public Record Office, London.

[42]. A. Fletcher (New York, N. Y.) to Arthur Willert (London), 15 September 1922. F. O. 395/376 of 1922, Public Record Office, London.

Foreign Office decided that "Doctor Horne's appointment should be regarded as being undertaken at the invitation of the University and not at the suggestion of the Indian Government". It was also decided that "emphasis be laid discreetly upon this point when an opportunity occurs".[43]

The files relating to Talbot Mundy's visit to India are also very revealing. He was President of the Anglo-American Society of New York and was very anxious to promote better understanding between America and England. He was well known to the British Embassy in Washington, D. C., which strongly endorsed Mundy's proposed visit to India. The telegram of the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy said that Mundy was "an admirer of British administration in India so that his articles would no doubt do good in America".[44] But just when the arrangements were being finalised in India, H. E. Horsfield, Director of the Central Intelligence, learnt that Mundy was likely to be preceded by another American journalist called Joshua Wanhope, who had been editor of the New York *Call*. *Call* was one of the journals that had published reports on the atrocities committed by the British authorities in the Punjab, and Horsfield naturally suspected that Wanhope's visit might be connected with the attempts of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lajpat Rai to give wide publicity to the nationalist cause in the United States. As at the Amritsar Congress held in December 1919, Tilak had suggested that Lajpat Rai should be appointed an unofficial ambassador of India in America for the purposes of educating American opinion in favour of India's claim to self-determination and had also issued an appeal to America for support, Horsfield sensed trouble in Wanhope's visit to India at this time. In a note he shrewdly and candidly observed:

[43] H. J. Seymour (Foreign Office) to J. W. Hose (India Office), 20 October 1920, Home Department, Political, Proceedings, February 1921, nos. 322-39, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

[44] Telegram from Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, 26 November 1919, Home Department, Political, Poll. A, May 1920, nos. 245-58, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

> In India we shall shortly have the Anglo-American Society Delegation [led by Talbot Mundy] as the guests of the Government of India and Mr Wanhope as the guest of the extremists... Thus we are likely to see repeated in the United States of America Press the game which has been played so long in India with Talbot Mundy as the *Ji Hazur* [yes-man of the Government] and Wanhope as the *Pro-Patriot.*[45]

Obviously, if the *ji hazur* credentials of Mundy were revealed, his propaganda would be suspected and the objective of the plan would be defeated. Horsfield, therefore, asked the government if it would not be possible "*to keep Mundy's invitation confidential*".[46] C. Kaye, one of the senior officers in the Home Department, carefully went into the matter, appreciated the point made by Horsfield, and noted:

> ...the possibility of Wanhope's and Mundy's propaganda efforts being contrasted, in the manner suggested above [by Horsfield], seems to make it desirable that the *latter's* [Talbot's] *party should be allowed to appear to be enterprising journalists who are independent seekers after truth* (*and copy*) *in India.*[47]

Yet another precaution was necessary. The *ji hazur* "seekers after truth" should not fall into wrong hands! An officer of the Central Intelligence noted subsequently that "it will be necessary in consultation with the Officer on Special Duty [Rushbrook Williams] to select a few friends at important places in India who would show some hospitality to these Pressmen and would also supplement our efforts to give them insight into the true state of India's moral and material progress". He warned:[48] "*The extent of mischief that*

[45] Note by H. E. Horsfield, 15 January 1920, Home Department, Political, Proceedings, November 1920, no. 55, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Note by C. Kaye, 15 January 1920, *ibid.* Emphasis added.

[48] Note by R. S. Bajpai, 28 October 1920, Home Department Political, Poll. A. Proceedings, December 1920, nos. 175-82, National Archives of India, New Delhi. Emphasis added. Earlier in this file

may be done if the Pressmen fall into wrong hands can never be exaggerated." Rushbrook Williams readily concurred.[40]

KATHERINE MAYO

Katherine Mayo was born in 1867 at Ridgeway in the state of Pennsylvania of the United States of America. She was educated in private schools in Boston and Cambridge in Massachusetts. In the eighteen-nineties her articles and stories began to appear in the *New York Evening Post*. Later her articles appeared in several magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Scriber's Magazine*, the *American Magazine*, the *North American Review*, *The Outlook*, etc.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, she lived for about eight years in the Dutch colony of Guinea in South America, where British East Indians constituted a sizable part of the population. Mayo later claimed that an East Indian saved her life while she was in Guinea. That was how she accounted for her interest in India.

Mayo was an assistant to Oswald Garrison Villard when he was writing his book *John Brown, 1800-1859* (Cambridge, Mass., 1910). Villard helped her in getting her stories published in some American magazines. But he detected early that in her stories about the Hindus, she had a tendency to depict only the darker aspects of life. He warned her against this tendency.[50]

Early in the post-war years, Mayo was seized with a desire to help promote good relations between America and England. To this end she found an organisation, the British Apprentice Club, in New York in 1921, with herself as

Rushbrook Williams had noted that on hearing of the cancellation of the projected visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1920, he had conveyed the information to the American pressmen with whom he had been negotiating. Thus the plan of bringing them to India that year fell through. However, some other pressmen, including Talbot Mundy, whose plans had already been finalised came to India.

[49] Note by Rushbrook Williams, 28 October 1920, *ibid.*

[50] Oswald Garrison Villard to Katherine Mayo, 21 July 1911, Papers of Oswald Garrison Villard, Folder no. 2555, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

treasurer and Moyca Newell as chairman. (Moyca Newell later accompanied her to India and became her life-long companion.) The objective of the British Apprentice Club was to give warm welcome and friendship to the cadets of the British Merchant Service who happened to visit the port of New York in the course of their services. The basic aim of the Club, according to these ladies, was to promote understanding between America and England because "nothing in the world today is so essential to World Peace as is the friendship between the two great English-speaking nations".[51]

Mayo had already published five of her books before she visited India and wrote *Mother India*.[52] Of these, *The Isles of Fear: An Examination of America's Task in the Philippines* is noteworthy in the context of Mayo's subsequent venture in India. In this book she dealt with the social and political problems of the Philippines and opined that except for the politicians, the Filipinos were neither ready for, nor desirous of, independence. She severely indicted the Jones Law of 1916 under which President Wilson's Administration had tried to introduce a measure of self-government in these islands. The indictment is said to have been so effective as to help check the movement in the United States for granting independence to the Philippines.[53] Naturally, the book was greatly acclaimed by Leonard Wood, the then Governor-General of the Philippines.[54] Soon after the book was published in America, it was published in England as well with an introduction by Lionel Curtis, who was one of the authors of the concept of diarchy incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1919. Curtis told his countrymen that it "can-

[51] A printed leaflet issued by Mayo and Newell, Papers of Katherine Mayo, Box 58. Yale University Library, New Haven, Cann. Hereafter, this source will be cited as Mayo Collection.

[52] *Justice to All* (1917); *The Standard Bearers* (1918); *That Damn Y* (1920); *Mounted Police* (1922); and *The Isles of Fear: An Examination of America's Task in the Philippines* (1925).

[53] See *The Publishers' Weekly* (Camcen, N.J.), vol. 138, 19 October 1940, p. 1602.

[54] Leonard Wood to Mayo, 16 September 1925, Mayo Collection, Box 7.

not be wise for us to ignore the examples and warnings afforded in their [the Americans'] more daring experiments".[55] Knowledgeable circles in England were quick in endorsing the usefulness of the book not only for America but also for England. The comment in the *Times Literary Supplement* ran as follows:

> We venture to believe that it will leave its mark on America's thinking about the Philippine problem and in due time of England's thinking about India and Egypt too... It is a book which no serious student of British Imperial problems can afford to ignore.[56]

To sum up: the following relevant points emerge from the above: (1) The British authorities cared for American opinion on India. (2) They were anxious to offset the effect of pro-India activities in America. (3) Immediately after the First World War, they had planned to engage some prominent American journalists and columnists to visit India so that on their return to America, they could do propaganda work in favour of British rule in India. (4) They had found it advisable to include a lady journalist among the visiting American journalists. (5) Katherine Mayo had considerable experience in journalism and book-writing before she visited India. (6) She was not only pro-British in her attitude and convictions, but also strongly hostile to nationalist movements of the subject peoples. (7) This was clearly reflected in her book *The Isles of Fear* which caught the attention of the British authorities and public men immediately after its publication in 1925, the year Mayo visited India.

[55] See "Preface to the English Edition", in Katherine Mayo, *The Isles of Fear: The Truth About the Philippines* (London, 1925), p. xii. The "Preface" is dated Williamstown, Mass., August 1925.

[56] *Times Literary Supplement* (London), 24 December 1925, p. 891.

Chapter Two

"MOTHER INDIA" AND THE BRITISH

"MOTHER INDIA"

Katherine Mayo's next venture after the *Isles of Fear* was naturally *Mother India*.[1] This book quickly became one of the best sellers in the English-speaking world and succeeded in raising an extensive controversy over the character of the Hindu civilisation and society. Thenceforth, Mayo was best known by this book.

In the first part of *Mother India* in the chapter entitled "The Bus to Mandalay" Mayo gives a bizarre picture of Calcutta and its Kalighat. The very first paragraph indicates what image of India and the Indians it is going to present to the world. It also indicates that, to tilt the case against the Indians, she was out to exploit the prevailing anti-communist political prejudices of many Americans, for the first thing she tells them about Calcutta, after mentioning its parks, its public buildings and its temples and mosques, is that in its courts, alleys and bazaars there were "*many little bookstalls where narrow-chested, near-sighted, anaemic young Indian students, in native dress, brood over piles of fly-blown Russian pamphlets*".[2] Then she descends upon Kaḷighat. She

[1] When the British journalist S. K. Ratcliffe read *The Isles of Fear* in 1925, it seemed to him "certain that she [Mayo] would go next to India and produce a book enforcing a conclusion similar to the one reiterated in *Isles of Fear*". See Ratcliffe's review of *Mother India* in the *New Republic* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 52, 21 September 1927, p. 127.

[2] Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (London. 1927), impression 5, p. 13. Emphases added. Hereafter, this source will be cited as *Mother India*.

gives a harrowing picture of how small goats were sacrificed before the goddess Kali in the presence of Hindu devotees—men and women. As if that were not enough to arouse the hatred of her readers against the Hindus and their religious rites, she adds loathfully:

> Meantime, and instantly, a woman who waited behind the killers of the goat has rushed forward and fallen on all fours *to lap up the blood with her tongue*—"in the hope of having a child". And now a second woman, stooping, sops at the blood with a cloth, and thrusts the cloth into her bosom, while half a dozen sick, sore dogs, horribly misshapen by nameless diseases, stick their hungry muzzles into the lengthening pool of gore.[3]

In the subsequent chapters, Mayo gives a detailed picture of the work-a-day life of the Indians, especially the Hindus. Every child in India, according to her, is brought up in an atmosphere "oversaturated" with sex. She paints the Hindus as sexually "exhausted". According to her, seven to eight out of every ten Hindus, who have means to command their pleasures, lose all potency between the ages of twenty-five and thirty.[4] She gives a horrid picture of the conditions of women in Hindu society, particularly the "barbarities" perpetrated on the child-wives by their husbands, their "earthly gods", and says that they are beyond description. She finds the Hindus so "sex-hungry" that, in many parts of the country, little boys, if physically attractive, were likely to be drafted for the satisfaction of grown-up men, or to be regularly attached to a temple as male prostitutes.[5] This, she reports, is in addition to the "devadasis", the "prostitutes of the gods", "a recognized essential of temple equipment".[6] Moreover, she continues, the Hindus are sexually so "reckless" that no Indian women of child-bearing age could safely venture, without special protection, within the reach of Indian men,[7]

[3] *Mother India,* pp. 15-16. Emphasis added.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 34.
[5] *Ibid.,* p. 32.
[6] *Ibid.,* p. 52.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 186.

so much so that mothers would not leave their daughters behind even in the care of the men of their own households.[8]

Mayo gives a sickening picture of the condition in which expectant mothers are delivered of their children with the assistance of the "dirtiest" and the "most ignorant" dhais who, according to her, pass for midwives in India. A dhai, she says, also looks after a family and protects it from the mischief of evil spirits if a woman in the family seems likely to die of childbirth, her child yet undelivered. This is what a dhai does in such situations, according to Mayo:

> First she brings pepper and rubs it into the dying eyes, that the soul may be blinded and unable to find its way out. Then she takes two long iron nails, and stretching out her victim's unresisting arms—for the poor creature knows and accepts her fate—drives a spike straight through each palm fast into the floor. This is done to pinion the soul to the ground, to delay its passing so that it may not rise and wander, vexing the living. And so the woman dies, piteously calling to the Gods for pardon for those black sins of a former life for which she now is suffering.[9]

Mayo pays special attention to the Hindu caste system. She relates how the Brahmins, under the sanction of the Hindu scriptures and other holy books, acquire a dominating position in society which they utilise for their own selfish ends and aggrandisement. She describes how in this process they reduce a vast mass of people to a "subhuman status" by making them untouchables. The missionaries and the British, she adds, are the only saviours of these untouchables.[10]

In tune with the British policy of pitting one against another, Mayo highlights the passionate monotheism of Islam[11] and the vitality, sturdiness and practical-mindedness of the Muslims as against the "degenerate materialism" of the Hindus which "masquerades" as spiritualism. The gulf be-

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 139-51.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

tween the two, she points out, is one of the greatest factors in the Indian situation.

Switching on to the political aspect of the Indian situation, she narrates the benefits which this land of chronic poverty, famine, chaos and anarchy received from the British right from the days of the East India Company. She speaks highly of the efforts made by the British to bring education to the Indian masses despite the tenaciously obstructive Hindu traditions and customs; of British policies and their success in implementing irrigation schemes, setting up power projects and laying railway lines to fight famine and modernise Indian agriculture and industry; and of the sincere attempts of the British to introduce constitutional reforms in the political set-up so as to educate the Indians in the art of self-government.

Mayo extensively quotes Gandhi in support of her contentions about the ills the Indians suffered from, but describes his voice as "a voice crying in the wilderness awakening but the faintest of echoes".[12] She, moreover, directs all her sarcasm at Gandhi. She shows him as doing his best to induce the young Indians to forsake modern medicine, and says that he regarded the European doctors as the worst of all doctors. She alleges that when he fell ill with appendicitis in prison in 1924, he "pleaded" with the British surgeon to operate upon him and rejected the option given to him of getting treated by an Ayurvedic surgeon of his own choice.[13] She also holds Rabindranath Tagore to ridicule by quoting him, out of context, in such a way as to make him appear as an advocate of child-marriage.[14] She is not kind to the members of the central and provincial legislatures either. She describes them as "mischievous children who by accident have got hold of a magnificent watch", who "fight and scramble to thrust their fingers into it, to pull off a wheel or two, to play with the mainspring, to pick out jewels".[15]

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 226.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 344-45.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

Mayo completely absolves the British of any responsibility for the ills of India or for India's political backwardness and squarely lays it at the door of the Indians themselves. Summarising her views on this point, she writes:

> The whole pyramid of the Hindu's woes, material and spiritual—poverty, sickness, ignorance, political minority, melancholy, ineffectiveness, not forgetting that subconscious conviction of inferiority which he for ever bares and advertises by his gnawing and imaginative alertness for social affronts—rests upon a rock-bottom physical base. *The base is, simply, his manner of getting into the world and his sex-life thenceforward.*[16]

COMPLICITY OF THE BRITISH IN MAYO'S WORK

The news of the publication of *Mother India* reached India towards the end of July 1927, and it immediately raised a storm throughout the country. The Indians felt that it was a scandalous libel on their civilisation and character. Moreover, they suspected the hand of the British in the publication, and felt that the aim of the book was only to discredit Indian arguments in favour of constitutional reforms.[17] On 4 September 1927 a public meeting was held in the Town Hall of Calcutta under the presidentship of the Mayor of Calcutta in which many speakers denounced the author of the book. This was followed by numerous such meetings in many other towns.

In the Legislative Assembly the Government of India had to face a barrage of questions on 19 September and 20 September which, *inter alia*, sought to know to what extent, if any, the Government of India or the provincial governments had assisted Mayo in collecting materials for her book. To one such question, J. Crerar, the Home Member, gave the following answer on 19 September 1927:

> I am not aware that the Government of India gave any assistance of any sort to Miss Mayo, but if she did get any

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 29. Emphasis added.
[17] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 10 August 1927.

> assistance, it was no more than would ordinarily be extended to any other member of the public.

When the Home Member was further pressed to reveal the precise nature and extent of the help given, he answered cautiously:

> I did not say that any materials were supplied to Miss Mayo. If ordinary courtesy was extended to her, I think there would be no reasonable objection on that ground.[18]

The Home Member denied that Mayo had been a guest of the Superintendent of Police in Lahore, and that she was provided with information by the head of the Department of Publicity of the Government of India. He also denied that the materials used by her in the book were checked by some officials before their actual publication. Moreover, he said that so far as the government was aware, free copies of *Mother India* were not supplied to the officials of the government.[19]

There were questions about the book even in the British House of Commons. The Under Secretary of State for India told a Labour Member on 14 November:

> Miss Mayo received no assistance in the production of her book, either from the India Office or from the Government of India, beyond the supply of official information on matters of fact which is afforded to any member of the public who asks for it.[20]

Did the Home Member in the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Under Secretary of State in the British House of Commons tell the whole truth? For an answer let us turn to the private papers of Mayo and the files of the British government in London and Delhi.

It has already been seen that when Mayo's book *The Isles of Fear* was published early in 1925, it immediately caught

[18] India, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 5. session 1 of 1927, pp. 4545-46.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 4545.

[20] UK, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates: Extracts Relating to Indian Affairs*, session 1927, pt. 9. p. 706.

the attention of important Englishmen. They were quick to perceive that the work was of value not only for America in its relation to the Philippines but also for England in its relation to India and Egypt.[21] From no less a place than Windsor Castle, Mayo earlier received a communication linking praise of her book with references to the British role in India. Her correspondent was Albert Baillie, Dean of Windsor and Domestic Chaplain to the King. In a letter dated 23 March 1925, Baillie spoke highly of *The Isles of Fear* and referred to the difficulties in ruling the Eastern races for their own good in accordance with democratic principles. Giving examples from the experience of the British in India and Egypt, he wrote:

> We, English, have been teaching the principles of law and enforcing impartial law in India for a very long time and yet if we left the law courts would relapse at once.

Baillie concluded with an expression of his wish to see Mayo in England before too long.[22]

MAYO IN LONDON

These developments undoubtedly encouraged Mayo. She arrived in Britain in October 1925 equipped with letters from Robert Wilberforce, Director of the British Library of Information in New York, the organisation which was looking after all propaganda work connected with India in the United States.[23] Wilberforce told J. W. Hose of the India Office in his letter, dated 1 October 1925, that Mayo and her companion, Moyca Newell, were "influential Americans" and had done "magnificent work" in establishing in New York the Walter Hines Page Memorial Club for providing comforts to the British Merchant Marine Cadets. He also informed him of their "intimate" friendship with Leonard Wood, the

[21] Supra, pp. 20-21.

[22] Albert Baillie to Mayo, 23 March 1925, Mayo Collection. Box 7.

[23] Rushbrook Williams to Crerar. 5 November 1924. Home Department. Political, File no. 417 of 1924, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Governor-General of the Philippines, and Mayo's book, *The Isles of Fear*. He assured Hose that Mayo's projected book on India would receive wide circulation in view of the attention she had been able to receive with the publication of *The Isles of Fear*. Giving further information with regard to her plan, he told Hose:

> She is particularly interested in questions of health and her visit [to India] affords a good opportunity for the Government of India to obtain an adequate presentation of the constructive work being done in this and other fields.

Wilberforce, therefore, suggested that every opportunity should be given to Mayo to see things in India which could with "advantage" be recorded. He also gave Hose a significant piece of advice. He wrote: "*It might also be possible to guide her in a general way as to the scope or limitations of her work.*"[24] Obviously, this would ensure the usefulness of the book.

Wilberforce addressed another letter to Lord Winterton, Under Secretary of State for India, introducing these ladies to him. Inevitably, he also wrote to Rushbrook Williams, who, as we have already said, had gone to the United States in 1920 to ensure effective propaganda there.

SOLICITUDE OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE INDIA OFFICE

To the British government, therefore, Mayo was not just another itinerant journalist from America. The Foreign Office, under whose auspices all propaganda work on behalf of the Government of India was being done in the United States through the agency of the British Library of Information in New York, at once took up with the India Office the question of providing facilities to her. The Foreign Office wrote to her:

[24] Robert Wilberforce to J. W. Hose, 1 October 1925, Home Department, Political, File No. 40 of 1926, National Archives of India, New Delhi. Emphasis added. Walter Hines Page Memorial Club appears to be the same sort of organisation as the British Apprentice Club, which was founded in New York in 1921 with Miss Moyca Newell as chairman and Miss Mayo as treasurer.

We have been into the question of facilities for you with the India Office and are assured that as a result of your visit there yesterday and before that they thoroughly understand what you want and are going to do their best to give you all the facilities you need.[25]

Acting with alacrity the India Office made arrangements for letters to be sent to the private secretaries of the Viceroy and the governors of Bengal and Bombay, informing them of Mayo's proposed visit to India and the object she had in view. No less a person than Lord Winterton, Under Secretary of State for India, informed Mayo of the action that was being taken to make her visit to India fruitful.[26]

Shortly thereafter, Mayo received a rather long letter from J. W. Hose of the Indian Office containing friendly advice on how she should go about her work in India. He suggested, for instance, that she should manage to spend a few days "in camps" in the village of some North Indian districts "in company with some experienced head of a district".[27] Along with such tips, Hose also mentioned that Mayo would find it useful to get acquainted with a certain English gentleman who happened to have booked his passage to India by the same boat by which Mayo was to travel. This interesting gentleman who would board the boat at Marseilles, Hose wrote, was J. H. Adam, an officer of the Indian Police Service. Hose and the India Office were apparently anxious to ensure that Mayo would not, by some oversight, fail to contact Adam on board the ship. It appears as though they were determined that the American journalist should have the companionship of policeman Adam. Hose touched on this point in a very casual manner in his letter to Mayo:

His [J. H. Adam's] duties have led him into many varieties of experience, not all of which would be useful to you. But I have told him to look out for you and to try to find on

[25] Arthur Willert (Foreign Office) to Mayo, 24 October 1925, Mayo Collection, Box 7.

[26] Lord Winterton (India Office) to Mayo, 6 November 1925, *ibid.*

[27] Hose to Mayo, 20 November 1925, *ibid.*

board other officers whose knowledge would be perhaps more useful.[28]

An indicated earlier, the officials of the India Office were very much impressed with Mayo's plans. Without losing time, Hose informed J. Crerar, Secretary to the Home Department of the Government of India, that Mayo and her friend Newell were proceeding to India and that they were likely to reach Bombay early in December. To leave no doubt in the minds of the officials of the Government of India, Hose emphasised that the ladies were "well-to-do" and, in the meetings with the officials of the India Office, "*have given a clear impression that they are friendly*". They were desirous of collecting information "as complete as possible on all subjects in which the provision of such information is likely to lead to the permanence of a good understanding between America and England". He, therefore, asked him to give all facilities to Mayo and her friend when they reached India.[29]

ARRANGEMENTS IN INDIA

Crerar was only too eager to oblige. As Secretary to the Government of Bombay, he had felt considerably concerned about the pro-nationalist activities in the United States early in the post-war years,[30] and now he had an opportunity to help counteract the effect of such activities. He promptly assured Hose that the Government of India would give "all assistance that may be required by Miss Mayo and Miss Newell during their visit to this country".[31] As a step towards this, he immediately wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay that "the Government of India will be grateful if the Government of Bombay will do what they can to give these ladies such assistance as they may re-

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Hose to Crerar, 4 November 1925, Home Department, Political, File No. 40 of 1926, National Archives of India, New Delhi. Emphasis added.

[30] Supra, pp. 6-7.

[31] Crerar to Hose, 23 November 1925, n. 29.

quire for the purpose of their visit".[32]

Meanwhile, Hose's letter to Crerar was circulated among the officials of the departments concerned with a view to making Mayo's plans effective. Colonel Graham, the Public Health Commissioner, noted that Mayo and Newell should see the Inspectors General of Civil Hospitals and Directors of Public Health in the provinces, for "left to themselves on such matters [public health] they may easily arrive at very erroneous conclusions". He also advised that after discussion with these ladies the *Department of Education, Health, and Lands should prepare their itinerary.*[33]

The consensus of the officials was that the ladies should proceed directly from Bombay to Delhi. The Home Secretary, therefore, directed the Director of Public Information to see that they did so. A subsequent note on the file says that the American ladies visited Delhi, called on the officers concerned, and "were given all the assistance necessary".[34]

GOVERNMENT MACHINERY AT MAYO'S BECK AND CALL

During Mayo's visit, the entire bureaucracy seems to have been on its toes. She was given all manner of facilities: accommodation, arrangement of visits to important areas and persons, and supply of materials, published and unpublished, confidential and nonconfidential. Some of Mayo's scribblings on loose sheets of paper indicate how much as a matter of routine she viewed the idea of bidding the British "excellencies" to comply with her requirements. For example, the following appear on some sheet of paper in Mayo's handwriting:

> Get Gov. of Calcutta to have Sir Tegart, Comr. of Police to take me over Calcutta.
>
> Must talk to him [illegible] and about Bengal municipal police.[35]

[32] Crerar to J. E. B. Hotson (Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay). 23 November 1925, *ibid.*

[33] Note by Colonel Graham, 8 December 1925, *ibid.* Emphasis added.

[34] Note by an official. 3 March 1926, *ibid.*

[35] Mayo Collection, Box 54.

Get H.E. [His Excellency] to write to Mr. Mumford, Comr. in Benares, and to Comr. in Allahabad and J.C. Smith.[36]

Very often Mayo used to write directly to the Private Secretary of a governor for quick and authoritative checking of facts, and the promptness with which the exalted officials complied with her request is proof of the very special status that the British Indian government accorded to her. When she was staying in Madras in the Government House, she wrote the following to the Private Secretary of the Governor:

Would you glance at the figures here given for circulation of Madras newspapers and tell me if you think them right?[37]

Pat came the answer from the Private Secretary:

I have checked the circulation figures by the latest statistics which were taken in 1924, and find those given in the attached papers are correct with the exception of the *Hindu*.[38]

The solicitude of the highest British officials of the government in India towards Mayo and their anxiety to provide her with all facilities and bring her into contact with the "right" persons is reflected in a three-page letter to Mayo from Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, written in his own hand on 10 February 1926. After expressing his happiness about Mayo's planned visit to Calcutta, Lytton expressed the hope that she would stay with him for a few days. Unfortunately he was going out of Calcutta on 11 February and would not be back until 22 February. He, however, informed her that he had asked J. G. Lay, the American Consul General in Calcutta, to introduce her to L. Birley, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and Sir Charles Tegart, Chief Commissioner of the Calcutta Police. He added: "Both these gentlemen will give you valuable information and I have spoken to both of them about you."[39]

That British officers also went to the extent of supplying confidential reports or materials to Mayo is brought out by

[36] *Ibid.*, Box 50.
[37] *Ibid.*, Box 52.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Lord Lytton to Mayo, 10 February 1926, *ibid.*, Box 8.

what happened in Calcutta. Chief Secretary Birley passed on to Mayo confidential copies of two of his interviews—one with the Congress leader, B. C. Roy (later Chief Minister of West Bengal), dated 8 March 1925, and the other with B. N. Sasmal of Contai, dated 6 October 1921.[40] Both these interviews related to some legislative measures in Bengal, and the intention of Birley in supplying these confidential reports to her seems to have been to show her how the Indians obstructed the government in enacting and implementing even those measures which were clearly aimed at improving the daily life of the masses.

BRIEFING BY THE VICEROY AND HIGH OFFICIALS

Before Mayo left for Bengal, she had lunch with Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, in Delhi on 26 January 1926. After lunch, at which many dignitaries, including three or four maharajas, were present, she had a half-hour interview with the Viceroy in his study. The Viceroy, according to the record of the interview written by Mayo, told her how proud he was of the British performance in India and especially of young Englishmen who, after finishing their career at Oxford or Cambridge, came to India and faithfully laboured for the Indian masses in the face of severe odds. He also told her:

> It is a curiously interesting fact that counting every soldier in the British troops in India, every British civil servant... every British man, woman, child and small baby in India, the total is less than 200,000 beings. In any two minutes they [Indians] could have got rid of us, had they desired, if they had been united.[41]

In Delhi, Mayo made the acquaintance of several high officials, including Basil Blackett, the Finance Member, Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member, and J. P. Thompson, the Political Secretary of the Government of India. Each one of these senior officials supplied her with mate-

[40] Mayo Collection, Box 8.
[41] Interview with Lord Reading. *ibid.*

rials. They were also generous with words of praise and encouragement. Finance Member Basil Blackett, for example, wrote to Mayo that he had "watched with enormous interest and complete confidence" the way she had set about her work.[42]

Thus enjoying the complete confidence of the government in India and getting ready assistance from them, Mayo, with her party, hurried from one part of the country to another during her three-month stay in India in the winter of 1925-26.

HELP BY THE BRITISH LIBRARY OF INFORMATION

The British authorities were of assistance to Mayo even after her return to the United States. Officials were prompt in sending materials that might be useful for her work. The British Library of Information in New York too enthusiastically placed itself at Mayo's service. Robert Wilberforce, Director of the Library, wrote to Mayo:

> Please call upon me for any help we can give you in the Library. It is a pleasure to cooperate with you, even in small way, in the interesting work you are producing.[43]

Now, if we recall the replies made on behalf of the government in the Indian Legislative Assembly and the British House of Commons,[44] we can see that the government did assist Mayo in a manner in which it would not have assisted any ordinary member of the public. In the light of the facts presented above, it is clear that neither the Home Member in the newly inaugurated Indian Legislative Assembly nor the Under Secretary of State for India in the august British Parliament told the truth. No ordinary member of the public could ever dream of receiving the facilities and the materials that Mayo and her assistants received. We may also recall that in the presence of officials like Sir Basil Blackett, the Finance Member, and John Coatman, Director of Public Information, Home Member Crerar had said in the Legisla-

42 Basil Blackett to Mayo, 2 February 1926, *ibid.*

43 Wilberforce to Mayo, 31 August 1926, *ibid.*

44 Supra, pp. 26-27.

tive Assembly that so far as the government was aware, no officials had been supplied with complimentary copies of *Mother India*. The Home Member had apparently turned a Nelson's eye to the issue. Blackett, in his letter to Mayo, dated 29 June 1927, on the official stationery of the Government of India, had acknowledged to her his having received a copy of *Mother India* so "kindly" sent to him. He had even waxed eloquent on the beauties of the book: "I am most grateful to you for so kindly sending me a copy and letting me be one of the first to enjoy a treat which is going to be enjoyed by many thousands of people."[45] Coatman, too, apart from the inevitable J. H. Adam, had received a complimentary copy of *Mother India*.[46]

J. H. ADAM: FRIEND, PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE OF MAYO

That Mayo had a very special status in India needs no further emphasis. It may, however, be interesting to take into account the sources of the ideas which affected her basic approach to the problem she had undertaken to handle in *Mother India*.

We have already met policeman J. H. Adam. Adam was Deputy Inspector General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, posted at Lahore. It is not clear whether the voyage from Marseilles to Bombay in the company of Mayo was in the line of duty. Be that as it may, Adam's quick success in winning the confidence of Mayo shows that he was a person of no mean talent. As he discoursed on India's problems, Mayo took down exhaustive notes. How impressed she was with her mentor can be seen when one peruses the exhaustive notes of the interviews, the painstaking way in which she prepared indexes to these notes, and the marginal remarks she scribbled on these notes and indexes.[47] The shipboard acquaintance did not end when she landed in Bom-

[45] Blackett to Mayo, 29 June 1927, Mayo Collection, Box 8.

[46] See Coatman to Mayo, 29 September 1927, *ibid.*, Box 9, and Adam to Mayo, 30 June 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.

[47] For example, at the margin of these notes, Mayo would write: "N.B.", "N.B.B.", "The *Most* [Important] of all".

bay. Mayo began to correspond regularly with Adam while she was in India, and the exchange of long, friendly letters continued even after her return to America.[48] The policeman from Lahore, whom the India Office first recommended to Mayo, became in truth her "friend, philosopher and guide", at least as regards India.

Having fully utilised the official hospitality given her in India, Katherine Mayo worked out the basic thesis of her projected book on board the *S. S. Razmak* on her way back to America. She sent the outline naturally to the man who, above all others, had influenced and guided her thinking—J. H. Adam, Esq, of the Indian Police Service. She summed up her thesis in these terms:

> A man born of a thirteen-year-old infected mother, by an infected and exhausted father, brought up from infancy in poisonous teachings and habits, ruinous to body and mind, from domestic, religious, social source, cannot possibly,
>
> 1. possess will power sufficient to run a mouse-trap let alone a government,
> 2. possess drive enough to pursue any prolonged effort of mind, or attack any problem, or resist any continued pressure,
> 3. produce good children.

She said that this was likely to be "the whole burden of my song".[49] She generously acknowledged that it was Adam who provided her the "source and directions" for her work—one which would have the explosive impact of a bomb. She made it explicit to Adam and enquired:

> You know how I feel about the source and directions of work that *is* work. I feel more and more, day by day, that

[48] In the Mayo Collection, the present writer found fifty handwritten pages of Adam's letters to Mayo. For a sample see Appendix 4.

[49] Mayo Collection, Box 48. This is the last portion (four pages) of Mayo's handwritten letter, and, as such, the date of the letter cannot be ascertained. Adam had sent back the portion along with his reply for ready reference.

> it was by no accident that you came and gave me that one idea at the beginning of my journey—if I write a general book, write a couple of chapters on this, it makes escape from the point more possible. Shall I make this just a complete bomb—self-contained and exclusive?[50]

So profound was her faith in her mentor that she implored him to continue to help her with guidance and suggestions. She pleaded: "Tell me what you think about it, and *send me any new material or points of view.* Do let your mind play on it."[51]

Adam was generous with his suggestions, no fewer than thirteen pages of them. In the first place, he drove home the point that the Indian Swarajist intelligentsia were a bunch of hypocrites just like the Filipino politicos about whom Mayo had written in *The Isles of Fear.* The overwhelming mass of the people in India, he said, "want to be left in peace...trust us and are satisfied with our rule but ...are ignorant and somewhat easily stampeded". He declared that it would be utter folly to attempt to plant democratic institutions among so inert a people as the Hindus:

> The Englishman with his ideals and his thirst for action wants to thrust on the Indian a democracy which depends for its success on the vigour and independence of the people. The Indian without the physique or the assertive independent spirit is bewildered, the intelligentsia revel in words and phrases.[52]

He was convinced that the continuance of British rule was in the best interest of the Indian people themselves. He affirmed that there were many Indians who admired the British and appreciated their efforts to help them to tread the difficult path of progress. According to him, the British could not put the house right, nor could they get out and let the house collapse. But if they stoically continued to bear the burden, "light and perhaps reason will come in

[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
[52] Adam to Mayo, 10 May 1926, *ibid.*, Box 8.

time". Meanwhile, it would be well for the Americans "to realize and support the new forces at work and not encourage mischief makers who talk of 'foreigners' and 'domination' and 'superiority'". Adam held out for Mayo's benefit a vision of a reconciliation of the Eastern and Western races into a "British-American world". "It will not be done by force but by wisdom and self-discipline..." A whole book could be written on the theme and Mayo was the right person to tackle the job, added Adam.

The British policeman's final word of advice on the project on hand was brief and precise: "...I would advise you to put your bombshell into two chapters of your work on India..."[53]

An examination of the text of *Mother India* reveals the impact of Adam's counsel on Mayo. As endorsed by him, the "bombshell" is in the first two chapters of the book. In Chapter I, entitled "The Argument", she asks why India was in a degraded situation. The fault did not lie with the British, she argues. According to her, India's degradation was due to the "inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality, lack of staying power and sustained loyalties, sterility of enthusiasm and weakness of life-vigour itself..." of the Indian people.[54]

In Chapter II, entitled "Slave Mentality", the American spinster of sixty gives a lurid picture of the "sexual commerce" of the Hindus and offers an explanation of this:

> Hindu custom demands that a man have a legitimate son at the earliest possible moment—a son to perform the proper religious ceremonies at and after the death of the father, and to crack the father's skull on the funeral pyre, whereby the spirit is released. For this reason as well as from inclination, the beginning of the average boy's sexual commerce barely awaits his ability. Neither general habit nor public opinion confines that commerce to his wife or wives.[55]

[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Mother India*, p. 24.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Having thus described the Hindu's sex life. Mayo reemphasises her original conclusion: "Given men who enter the world physical bankrupts out of bankrupt stock... need you, while this remains unchanged, seek for other reasons why they are poor and sick and dying and why their hands are too weak, too fluttering, to seize or to hold the reins of government?"[56]

These themes were the bombshells that prepared the ground for her exposition of other aspects of Indian life. She explains how difficult it was for the British government, despite its sincere efforts, to teach Indians to improve their life and adapt themselves to the democratic principles and practices advocated by Western civilisation and culture. Adam was delighted by Mayo's fidelity particularly to his main concept. He wrote: "...you have marvellously succeeded in conveying indirectly the real message—is a democracy anything but a danger to India? It has nothing in common with the tradition or sentiments."[57]

In fact, Adam appears to be the pervasive spirit of Mayo's *Mother India*. An examination of Mayo's notes of her interview with Adam on board the ship from Marseilles to Bombay bears out this appraisal. Adam had striven to expose the "fallibility" of Indians such as Lajpat Rai, Syed Hussain and Taraknath Das, who had been active in the United States on behalf of the Indian nationalists. With painstaking detail he had enlightened Mayo on such themes as the difference between the traditions of Christianity and Hinduism and also the psychology of the Hindus. He had implanted in her mind the concept of the "sex obsession" of the Hindus. He had spoken on the evolution of the phallic symbolism in India and had described how all Hindus worshipped the symbol of the generative organ. Hindu religious books, he had told Mayo, were full of ideas clothed in sex imagery.[58]

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[57] Adam to Mayo, 5 October 1927, Mayo Collection. Box 9.

[58] Interview with Adam, II. *ibid.*, Box 48. The following extract shows the influence of what Adam had told Mayo on this point:

"Siva, one of the greatest of the Hindu deities, is represented on high-road shrines, in the temples, on the little altar of the home. or in per-

He had told her that if she wanted evidence of the sex obsession and the resulting devitalisation of the Hindus, she had only to take a look at the advertisements in the newspapers, especially vernacular newspapers.

The wide range of subjects that Adam had covered in his talks and correspondence and the detailed manner in which he had analysed various issues overwhelmed Mayo, and she repeatedly thanked him for his assistance and spoke glowingly of his influence on her ideas. Adam, in turn, made no secret of his profound interest not merely in Mayo but in her projected book as well. Informing her that he was "tremendously interested in the progress" of her book, Adam wrote to her charmingly on 10 January 1927:

> It is flattering to feel that *you attribute part of your ideas to my influence*—but you can honestly claim the whole of the book—success or failure—because I could never have written a book and certainly not with the human outlook and clearness of "The Isles of Fear".[59]

When *Mother India* came out, he congratulated Mayo on her achievement, and, to ward off any feeling of guilt, reassured her that it was her work and not of anybody else's:

> I don't think you owe any thanks to me for *the* book. It is your own observation in India and is far superior to anything I could have given you. If I have had any influence I am quite unrepentant as the book has done more to induce sanity in dealing with India than anything which has been done for years and years.[60]

Even after the publication of *Mother India*, Mayo continued to press Adam for material on India so that she could write more books, her appetite having been whetted both by

sonal amulets, by the image of the male generative organ, in which shape he receives the daily sacrifices of the devout. The followers of Vishnu, multitudinous in the south, from their childhood wear painted upon their foreheads the sign of the function of generation." *Mother India*, p. 31.

[59] Adam to Mayo, 10 January 1927, Mayo Collection, Box 8. Emphasis added.

[60] Adam to Mayo, 5 October 1927, *ibid.*

the welcome reception *Mother India* got in the American and British markets and the flurry of criticism it aroused in India. Adam undertook to make discreet enquiries about material which may prove to be useful to her but he was now very cautious. He wrote to her on 19 January 1928:

> I have to be very careful as already there has been some suspicion against me that I supplied information for *Mother India* though anyone who read the book could see that the facts were collected by yourself all over India and not in one area.[61]

JOHN COATMAN: THE CONDUIT

Another British official who proved to be of great assistance to Mayo was John Coatman, Director of Public Information, Government of India. He appears to have been the chief conduit for material going to Mayo from the various departments of the government. He was of use particularly in checking and rechecking information and statistics and in securing documents or information that was not readily available. For example, Mayo wanted some information about certain allegedly obscene posters relating to the Jallianwala Bagh incident. Coatman wrote to her about this on 24 February 1926:

> The evidence before the Hunter Committee was taken in camera and is all in Simla. As soon as I get up there at the beginning of April, I will get it out and send the information to you in America.[62]

On another occasion he wrote:

> I gave a copy of the Rowlatt Commission Report to Field, much against the will of my office superintendent as it is getting rare now. So it will be available with him. But if you must have one in your own possession, I will hunt one in Simla and send it to you.[63]

[61] Adam to Mayo. 19 January 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.
[62] John Coatman to Mayo. 24 February 1926. *ibid.*. Box 8.
[63] Coatman to Mayo, 11 March 1926, *ibid.*, Box 51. When Katherine Mayo was in India. she had two assistants: Miss Moyca Newell and Captain H. H. Field. While Miss Newell was her life-long com-

It was Coatman, again, that provided Mayo with her most startling "evidence" of the sexual depravity of the Hindus. In an interview he gave her on 29 January 1926 in Delhi, he told her:

> It is safe to say that eight out of ten Hindoos, all over India, between the ages of 25 and 30 years are impotent. Look at any Indian-owned papers and you will find a heavy percentage of the advertisements are of cures for impotence.[64]

Coatman told Mayo that the Hindus were so consumed by a desire to satiate their thirst for sex that no Indian women could venture to go into a village or any private house. These were only the starting-points for Coatman's tale to the fascinated American. He proceeded to tell Mayo that the practice of sodomy was common and general among the Hindus. He averred that people practised it even upon their own sons, and that there was no shame attached to it. There was no public opinion against the practice. The clue to India's decadence, according to Coatman, lay in the prevalence of sodomy and of immature motherhood, of sexual excess and exhaustion. These abominations led to the natural consequences, i.e. lack of will power and the poor physique of the Hindus.[65]

One has just to glance through the pages of *Mother India* to realise what a deep impact ideas such as these made upon Mayo's mind.[66]

Not content with filling Mayo's mind with such filth, Coatman took further pains to convince her that India was by no means ready for self-rule on democratic lines. He attacked the Swarajists as insincere politicians who could not

panion. H. H. Field was very closely associated with her in her work on India. He took notes from interviews, wrote the diaries, checked the facts with the officials and, in fact, later, himself wrote a book in her defence, namely *After "Mother India"* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1929).

[64] Interview with Coatman, 29 January 1926, *ibid.*, Box 57. The original is dated 29 January 1925, which is obviously wrong.

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] For example, see *Mother India*, pp. 32, 34, 109 and 186.

be regarded in the same light as American or British political leaders. He lamented:

> If only we could get a few sincere politicians in the legislatures who would tell just what they want, who would face facts and think out the needs of their country just as your leaders or ours would do, then, I think we could really begin to think of how we could gradually make over power to the educated representatives of the Indian peoples... The Indian ministers in the provinces have not been a good lot on the whole. There has been far too much nepotism and far too much window-dressing by them and none of them have shown any of the powers of real statesmen.[67]

For Mayo's benefit Coatman expressed his conviction "that the Oriental is naturally incapable of assimilating the ideas and working the institutions of democratic government".[68]

Having thus briefed her about the Indians and their capacities, Coatman "eagerly awaited" the publication of Mayo's book. He was confident that the book was going to be a "good one".[69]

DID ANY BRITISH OFFICIAL READ THE MANUSCRIPT OF "MOTHER INDIA"?

In the Legislative Assembly on 19 September 1927, the Government of India had denied that any of its officials had checked the material before it was published in book form. It had been specifically asked, whether any of its officials had gone through the proof of the print. So, here, we are confronted with an interesting question: Did Mayo submit the manuscript of her book to any official or person connected with the Government of India? In the "Foreword" to *Mother India,* Mayo herself declares:

> ...the manuscript of the book *has not been* submitted to any member of the Government of India, nor to any Briton

[67] Coatman to Mayo, 23 December 1926, Mayo Collection. Box 8.
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] Coatman to Mayo, 24 February 1926, *ibid.,* Box 8 and Coatman to Mayo, 11 March 1926, *ibid.,* Box 51.

> or Indian connected with official life. It has, however, been received by certain public health authorities of international position who are familiar with the Indian field.[70]

In view of this, some of the facts which emerge from a study of the Mayo papers are worth noting.

Firstly, there is positive evidence to indicate that Mayo was anxious and willing to submit her manuscript to the Under Secretary of State for India. On 6 February 1927, while she was giving her final touches to the manuscript of the book, she wrote to Lord Winterton, Under Secretary of State for India: "Did I not say to you, when first I saw you in India office, that I should want to show you my mss. before publication?"

Secondly, there is clear proof that she had decided to get it approved by no less a person than the Home Member of the Government of India himself. She wrote as follows to one of her British friends (Boyle) shortly before the manuscript was completed:

> I have about another six weeks' work to do on my manuscript. I would give a good deal for a reading by a [sic] such an Englishman as Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member in India—someone of great knowledge and not afraid of terribly frank truth-telling. It has come to me, as I have worked, that I cannot smooth over anything.[72]

There is a third piece in the Mayo Collection which also throws some light on this matter. It is one of the letters of H. H. Field, one of Mayo's assistants, dated 5 March 1926. In this letter Field told Mayo of the anxiety of the Governor of the United Provinces over the fact that her pro-British approach was too obvious. Then expressing his own concern, Field wrote:

> I don't say that you are wrong but I do say that you have seen the light before you begin and you wanted to be show

[70] *Mother India*, p. 9. Emphasis added.
[71] Mayo to Lord Winterton, 6 February 1927, Mayo Collection, Box 8.
[72] Mayo to Boyle, *ibid.* The letter is undated.

> [sic] the way. *Will you really allow M and L.O.B. to use the blue pencil?*[73]

In the light of Mayo's letter to Boyle, already referred to, it is obvious that "M" stands for Muddiman, the Home Member in the Government of India. It is not clear who L.O.B. was. In any case, it is clear that L.O.B. was an important person who either was connected with the Government of India or took active interest in the affairs of the Government of India. That he was most intimately connected with Mayo and her project on India is very well indicated by the contents of a two-page letter written by Mayo in her own hand. Addressing his as "Dearest L.O.B.", she first gave him some details as to how she spent the day and how *Mother India* was praised in some of the meetings she addressed. She was conscious that *Mother India* had been attacked in some circles. Nevertheless, the praises showered on her had encouraged her to undertake another project on India. "I begin to *feel* the new book", she confided to L.O.B. She also told her collaborator: "*We* must make the new book a rip-roarer." For this "there will be work to do in England". In the meantime, they could start making some inquiries, she suggested.[74]

From the foregoing, four facts definitely stand out:

1. Mayo offered to submit her manuscript to Winterton, Under Secretary of State for India, before she left London.

2. Even as late as about six weeks before the finalisation of her manuscript, she wanted to give a good deal of it to Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member of the Government of India, for perusal and comment.

3. When she was in India, it had been arranged that Muddiman and L.O.B. should go over the manuscript, although Field was anxious to make sure that she would allow them "to use the blue pencil".

4. L.O.B. was a collaborator in Mayo's project.

[73] H. H. Field to Mayo. 5 March 1926, *ibid.*, Box 56. Emphasis added.
[74] Mayo to L.O.B., *ibid.*, Box 52. The letter is undated.

However, Mayo and some of her British advisers finally decided that persons such as the Under Secretary of State for India should not read the final version, perhaps to enable them to disclaim any prior knowledge. The murky motivations of the American writer and her high-ranking British collaborators is brought out in Mayo's letter to the Under Secretary of State for India, Lord Winterton, on 6 February 1927. The letter, referred to briefly earlier, may be cited in full:

Dear Lord Winterton:

Did I not say to you, when I first saw you in India Office, that I should want to show you my mss. before publication?

Now that I am just finishing the mss., that step seems to me unwise. I have built up my statement largely on Indian authorities.

I have kept carefully in mind the necessity of embarrassing no British official by identifying him by implication as a source of information. But I have carried the war into the other camp, and called spades spades, as to Indians. I have said things that none of you wants to say, or can say, so long as your policy is one of persuasion rather than of coercion, and my whole thesis is built on spades of that nature.

I feel, therefore, that it will be happier for you, and stronger for the book, if you can all say, when it comes out, that you had no knowledge of its nature, that you were never afforded a reading or even a synopsis of the text, that your connection with it is limited to travel courtesy afforded to a stranger American and to the civility of answering requests for public statistics.

I should like to be able to say that, in the foreword of the book, and to shoulder, personally, all responsibility for my own frank talk.

May I?[75]

[75] Mayo to Lord Winterton, n. 71. For the last paragraph of the letter, see Chapter III, p. 68.

Winterton agreed that Mayo's strategy was very sound. Thanking her for her letter, he wrote:

> It adds, if possible, to the interest with which I have been anticipating your book. I cannot question your decision to withhold your manuscript from British official eyes until after publication; speaking for myself I think your decision wise—your reasons are convincing.[76]

In the light of this correspondence it seems fair to suppose that the final manuscript of *Mother India* was not submitted to the India Office in London. What made Mayo change her mind? The search for a clue to this riddle leads straight to J. H. Adam, the ever-obliging policeman and Mayo's friend and guide in her project. In a letter, dated 10 January 1927 (already referred to), Adam advised her not to ask anyone in England to go through the work. He was probably worried that some official with a sporting instinct might influence her not to belabour the prostrate Indians beyond a reasonable point. He wanted the world to have the pure stuff prepared by Mayo under his own continual guidance. Wrote Adam:

> I hope and trust you have decided *not* to take your manuscript over to England to get someone to vet it. It would be a great mistake. First of all they would want you to cut out all the things they would not have written themselves—and by the time they and you had dissected and analysed it and criticised and talked of wisdom and expediency and such debatable matters the unfortunate book would either been killed or it would come before the world like a grey-haired old man instead of a fresh and vigorous child. It would not have been a book about India but like so many others—a book of preconceived ideas about India with a smattering of local colour.[77]

The effect of this letter appears to have been instantaneous, for it was only on 6 February 1927 that Mayo wrote her

[76] Lord Winterton to Mayo, 23 February 1927, ibid., Box 7.
[77] Adam to Mayo, 10 January 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.

letter to Lord Winterton changing her mind about the submission of her manuscript to him.

This, however, does not rule out the possibility that Mayo actually submitted her manuscript to Sir Alexander Muddiman or L.O.B. or some other official in India. Adam's advice was not to take her manuscript to *England*, where, he was afraid, the hot stuff would be watered down. As regards Muddiman, this apprehension does not seem to have any basis, for, as Mayo herself told Boyle in her letter already referred to, Muddiman was "not afraid of terribly frank truth-telling". In any case, there is positive evidence to show that the aides of Muddiman definitely knew what the manuscript was like. "We are all very anxious to see your book as we *hear that it is a real rip-snorter and as good even as the Philippine book which is very high praise indeed.*" The writer of these lines was J. Coatman, Director of Public Information in the Home Department of the Government of India.[78]

MANUSCRIPT SENT TO KIPLING

That the imperialist in Katherine Mayo[79] would not rest in peace unless some pro-empire authority had approved of the manuscript is clear from yet another piece of paper in the Mayo Collection. This is a copy of a letter received by her assistant, H. H. Field, from no less a person than Rudyard Kipling, the doyen of the pro-empire writers in England. As the letter is significant, the whole of it is being reproduced here:

Private

Bateman's
Burwash
Sussex

Dear Mr. Field:

Many thanks for the "Mother India" which needless to say I have read with interest. I think it is possible that I

[78] Coatman to Mayo, 23 December 1926, *ibid.* Emphasis added.
[79] Even her friend Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, thought 'she was an imperialist". See Sedgwick to Mayo, 23 February 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.

> may be able to be of some use when the work comes out, but it is out of my power to write on the lines you suggest; I have made it a rule never to pronounce a public opinion on published work, and if I were to break my rule now, it would not be fair to people whom I have had to refuse in the past. .
>
> Yours sincerely,
> Rudyard Kipling[80]

The use of the expression "when the work comes out" makes it clear that the manuscrpit of *Mother India* was sent to Kipling. It is also clear that Kipling did not disapprove of the manuscript; on the other hand, he read it "with interest". What is still more noteworthy is the audacity of Mayo's assistant to attempt to dictate to Kipling the manner in which he would publicly support the book. Kipling certainly proved more cautious and more circumspect than the new converts from the Republic of America. He refused to sign along the dotted line as desired by Mayo's assistant although he did not completely disappoint him. He could be of some use when the book was out!

At this stage it would be interesting to have a second look at what Mayo said about submitting the manuscript to any Englishman. In her "Foreword" to *Mother India,* she wrote:

> ...the manuscript of this book has not been submitted to any member of the Government of India, *nor to any Briton or Indian connected with official life.* It has, however, been reviewed by certain public health authorities of international position who are familiar with the Indian field.[81]

It should be noted that Mayo was categorical in her denial in the first sentence. In the second sentence also she said, by implication, that no other person except some "public health authorities of international position" perused the

[80] Kipling to Field, Mayo Collection. The copy is undated.
[81] *Mother India,* p. 9. Emphasis added.

manuscript. Was Mayo speaking the truth and nothing but the whole truth?

We have already seen that the manuscript was submitted to Kipling. It is true that Kipling was known mainly as an author. But it should be remembered that not only had he been connected with public life in India but he had also been an active member of an important Commission appointed by the British government in the wake of the First World War for no fewer than the last eighteen years of his life,[82] and it was during this period that the project of *Mother India* was undertaken and executed. On the face of it, could it not be said that Mayo was guilty of concealing the truth when she wrote her "Foreword" to *Mother India?*

PURPOSE BEHIND "MOTHER INDIA"

When *Mother India* came out speculation was rife as to what impelled Mayo to mount such a scurrilous attack on Hinduism and Indian nationalist forces. Mayo felt called upon to offer explanations, and this she did through lectures, group meetings and the journals which had generously opened their columns to her. She gave one such lecture at the house of Lady Lyttleton in London early in May 1928. A few days later, Lady Emily Lutyens, who was present at the meeting, summed up in a letter to Mayo the reasons given by the latter for writing *Mother India* and asked her to comment on the summary she had prepared.

One reason for writing *Mother India,* according to Lady Lutyens, was the need to counteract the anti-British propaganda that was then being carried on in America by the Indians as also to expose their statements claiming spiritual

[82] Rudyard Kipling was born at Bombay on 30 December 1865. His father, John Lockwood Kipling (1837-1911), was a member of the Indian Educational Service of the Government of India. While in India, Rudyard Kipling served on the staff of the *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) and *The Pioneer* (Allahabad) during 1882-89. In England, he was a member of the Imperial War Graves Commission from September 1917 to January 1936. For details see Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* (London, 1955) and Louis L. Cornell, *Kipling in India* (New York, N.Y., 1966).

supremacy for India. Another was to prevent the enactment of a bill then pending before the US Congress which would have granted citizenship rights to the Indians in America. The third was the suggestion made to Mayo by two American officers of health to the effect that she should attend the International Health Congress in Geneva and then go to India and report on health conditions there which could form a chapter in a book on international health. This, according to the American doctors, was necessary as India presented a menace to the health of America.[83]

Mayo, who was in London at that time, replied to Lady Lutyens, emphatically stating that her purpose in writing *Mother India* had been disclosed in the book itself on pages 20, 21 and 363 and that the impressions recorded in her (Lady Lutyens's) letter of 19 May were inaccurate and misleading except in so far as they might accord with the statements made in the book.[84]

So let the book itself speak out. In Chapter I Mayo refers to the big size of India as also to India's nearness to the United States, Bombay being only three weeks' journey from New York. She, therefore, believes that some knowledge of the main facts concerning so big and so near a neighbour was absolutely necessary for all Americans in their own interest.

Elaborating the point further, she refers to the hazy notions of Americans about India more or less unconsciously absorbed from professional propagandists, from religious or mystical sources, or from tales, books of travel, novels, verses, etc. concerning India. She concludes:

> It was dissatisfaction with this status that sent me to India, to see what a volunteer unsubsidized, uncommitted and unattached, could observe of common things in daily human life.

[83] Emily Lutyens to Mayo, 19 May 1928, Mayo Collection, Box 11. Lady Lutyens was wife of Sir Edward Lutyens, the chief architect of New Delhi and especially the Viceregal Lodge (now Rashtrapati Bhavan). She herself was an active social reformer.
[84] Mayo to Lutyens, 6 June 1928, *ibid.*

Mayo further explains that she was interested in observing the common things in the life of the Indians as it was this facet of their life—namely their habits and practices with regard to public health, sanitation, morals, education, etc.—which was likely to affect the common American, more so as the Indians in America were agitating for citizenship rights. That is why she, as she narrates in the book, told the official at the India Office in London when she called there in October 1925:

> I should like it be accepted that I am neither an idle busybody nor a political agent, but merely an ordinary American citizen seeking test facts to lay before my own people.[85]

In the concluding chapter Mayo foresees that the feelings of many Indians would be hurt by the observations made in her book. But the object of the book, she writes, would be served if, as a result of this task of telling the truth, "there need be no further waste of life and time for lack of a challenge and a declaration!"[86]

Before entering into a controversy with Lady Lutyens with regard to the purpose of her book Mayo had declared, through the columns of the Chicago weekly *Liberty*, that she was as thorough an American as anybody could be and that she had the privilege of serving her country to the best of her ability whenever she saw an opportunity. The subject of India seemed to offer such an opportunity as India was a big country and a neighbour. She adds: "So, appointing myself to the job, to India I went: not out of love for the Indian, as some suggest—my desire to help the struggling masses came later, after I had seen their misery..."[87]

Thus, the primary motive behind *Mother India*, according to Mayo, was nothing but to present to the Americans a truthful picture of the life of the common man in India and thus to serve her country once more. The point to be noted is that in these explanations, she does not speak of her desire

[85] *Mother India*, pp. 20-21.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 363.
[87] *Liberty* (Chicago, Ill.), vol. 14, January 1928, p. 36.

a book on Englishmen like C. F. Andrews and Battye showing how they had identified themselves with the Indians and had initiated a process of building up a spiritually creative fellowship of different races.[89]

Carter, however, had such great misgiving about the ability of Mayo to do a work of the type he had outlined that he held up the dispatching of this letter for ten days. He again wrote to her on 30 November explaining why he had posted the first letter so late. First, he felt that she might have regarded the letter as a lecture to her. Secondly, he was afraid that he had not been able to clarify his point. Thirdly,

> ... I was reluctant to have Gandhi, Datta and Andrews open up their hearts to you only to discover months afterwards that *your book turned out to be pro-British instead of pro-humanity*.[90]

Carter, however, was able to set his fears at rest, and he dispatched the letter. He, nevertheless, reemphasised his earlier point:

> Those who are going to render the best service to India in the coming years are those who are able to see the greatness and the goodness of the Indian people. A sufficient number have recorded their ills.[91]

From this account it is obvious that Mayo was out to write a book which would give credit to the British for their administration in India.

E. C. Carter, however, was not alone in suspecting the pro-British bias of Katherine Mayo. The most interesting aspect of this matter is that some of the highest British authorities themselves were convinced that Mayo would not be able to hide her pro-British bias and were rather concerned at this. This is revealed in H. H. Field's correspondence with Mayo. On 5 March 1926 Field wrote to her from the Governor's Camp in the United Provinces:

89 *Ibid.*
90 Carter to Mayo, 30 November 1925, *ibid.* Emphasis added.
91 *Ibid.*

> I have just had an hour and half's talk with H.E. [His Excellency, the Governor of the United Provinces.] He is really perturbed about you, dear, he says that *you appeared to them all, here, to be like a good hound on a scent running it down in a splendid manner... or like an excellent barrister preparing a brief... against the Indian.*

As to the evidence of this, Field wrote:

> He [the Governor] said that many of your questions called pointed to a preconceived opinion and the questions you give me in your blessed letter that greeted me and did me good last night all lead one way.

Field also explained why His Excellency was concerned at this. The reasons were:

> ...That [*The*] *Isles of Fear* has appeared and that your visit to this country is known and that he fears you will give the other side too good a target to shoot at.[92]

There were others also who were convinced what type of book Mayo was going to write. Field had a lunch at Lady Blackett's in Delhi on 9 March 1926. Informing Mayo of what happened there, he wrote:

> At lunch today at Lady Blackett's Theo said with a glance at me. "You can be certain that anything Miss Mayo writes on India will be pro-British."[93]

Thus it should be obvious that Mayo's claim that she went to India unbiassed may be convincing to herself but not to her American and British friends who knew her from close quarters. Her pro-British bias was too obvious even for her British friends to ignore. She went to India "like an excellent barrister preparing a brief against the Indian", a brief which was destined to be "pro-British". As such, her claim that she went to India as an uncommitted writer can hardly be maintained.

[92] H. H. Field to Mayo. 5 March 1926. *ibid.*, Box 56. Emphasis added.

[93] Field to Mayo. 9 March 1926. *ibid.* Lady Blackett. wife of Sir Basil Blackett. Finance Member in the Government of India. was American by birth. She became very friendly to Mayo and her associates while they were in India.

TO SECURE AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE BRITISH

There is yet another side to the question of Mayo's purpose in going to India and writing *Mother India*. She felt that the Indian question was a hindrance in the way of improving relations between England and the United States, as the Americans were prone to believing what the Indians said about British rule in India. Hence her mission was to report on India so that this hindrance was removed. Although she once protested to Lady Lutyens against ascribing any such motive to her, even Lord Sydenham, her great admirer, confirmed this when he, for her benefit, thus summed up a talk given by her at the Royal Hospital in London:

> You described pointing out that [it] was typical of the intensive propaganda by Indians and others to spread wild falsehoods about India throughout America. The effect is to create the worst impression of British methods and policy. You went to India realizing the evil effect of all this on Anglo-American relations, and you went to India to ascertain and proclaim the truth in your country.

The Lord himself was so delighted at this that he placed his services at the disposal of this lady for the furtherance of this cause. He wrote to her:

> I am sure that now you have got the ear of the American public you will be able to do a great work in promoting good relations between our countries, and if at any time I can be of any use to you I shall be delighted.[94]

It would be remembered that these were the times when the British were too conscious of the fact that they needed American help and sympathy in all important matters that confronted them. They were alive to the fact that they needed American support on the Indian question. J. H. Adam, in his task of fully preparing Mayo in her Indian venture, had taken pains to impress upon her the desirability of America

[94] Lord Sydenham to Mayo, 13 May 1928, *ibid.*, Box 11. Sydenham had been Governor of Bombay during 1907-13 and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Empire League during 1915-21.

casting off its isolationism and joining hands with England in establishing a British-American world.[95] "... I feel that American support in the right direction [on the question of India] *is all important at present*", he subsequently told Mayo. He did not fail to remind Mayo that the American liberals such as Borah had done "a lot of harm" during the war years.[96]

Coatman, the Director of Public Information of the Government of India, also pleaded with folded hands:

> We are all very anxious to see your book as we hear that it is a real rip-snorter and as good even as the Philippine book which is very high praise indeed... Your knowledge of your own problem in the Philippines will make your observations on our somewhat similar task here more than usually valuable... *take pity on us and get your book out as soon as possible.*[97]

What was the urgency? Why were the British officials stepping down from their high pedestals and praying to this plebeian American lady for her favour? The clue is provided by the fact that the appointment of a Statutory Commission to advise on the possible constitutional reforms in India was being debated in the high echelons of the British government, and conservative elements both in England and India wanted to ensure that the Commission did not prove a derelict. This urgency was made clear to Mayo by her adviser J. H. Adam. He wrote to her on 10 January 1927:

> I am eager to see your book [on India] and see what conclusions you have come to—all the more as the Commission to review the Reforms will be appointed in the next year or so and your book may help in the solution.[98]

[95] Adam to Mayo. 20 May 1926, *ibid.*, Box 8.
[96] Adam to Mayo. 30 June 1927. *ibid.* Emphasis added. William Edgar Borah was a prominent liberal leader of the United States. He had been a member of the Senate since 1907 and was sympathetic to the nationalist cause of India.
[97] Coatman to Mayo, 23 December 1926. n. 78. Emphasis added.
[98] Adam to Mayo, 10 January 1927, n. 77.

Apparently Mayo listened to the mercy calls, and the book came out in the summer of 1927, about six months before the appointment of the Simon Commission. *Mother India* had done the right work, and so, as the time of the appointment of the Commission drew nearer, the Director of Public Information of the Government of India could not restrain himself. He assured Mayo:

> What you say about our work in this country [India] has cheered us a lot. Now that people in the Empire and the USA realize what we are up against *we shall get a lot of moral support which will stand us in good stead in the hard days to come.*[99]

Coatman was so overwhelmed on this occasion that he renewed his prayer to god ever to preserve "the friendship of the two great nations [England and America] who together ought to keep the world stable and fit for humanity to live a good life".[100]

JOY OF THE BRITISH OFFICIALS AT THE PUBLICATION OF "MOTHER INDIA"

That the British officials in England or India were not disappointed in Mayo is evident from the high praise they showered on her when *Mother India* saw the light of day.

Miss Stella Charnaud, who was Secretary to the Viceroy Lord Reading, during Mayo's sojourn in India, and who later married the Viceroy after the death of his first wife, informed Mayo how impressed the British Prime Minister was with the book. Writing on 10 March 1928, she told Mayo:

> I met the Prime Minister at dinner a night or two ago and he had obviously read it [*Mother India*] very carefully and was much impressed with it. It is difficult for me to tell you really how great an impression you have made...[101]

Mother India caught the attention of the British King

[99] Coatman to Mayo, 29 September 1927, *ibid.*, Box 9. Emphasis added.

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] Stella Charnaud to Mayo, 10 March 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.

personally. According to the version of "an American doctor of international health fame", the King commanded his literary adviser to prepare a thorough digest of the book with his own opinion as to its accuracy. The literary adviser did this, and endorsed all of Mayo's contentions while making only a slight reservation about their general applicability.[102]

The Conservative and Unionist Central Office in London was profoundly impressed with the book. Their delight was expressed by Dudley B. Myers, Joint Honorary Secretary of the Conservative India Parliamentary Committee during 1924-32, in several of his letters addressed to H. H. Field. In a letter dated 22 December 1927, he wrote:

> Miss Mayo's book has sunk deep and carried far. The full effect of it will never be calculable but certainly no book on India has ever had such a tremendous influence, which cannot fail to be for good, on the social and political conditions which are so inextricably interwoven in that country.[103]

Myers informed Field that he was very much interested in Mayo's present or projected journalistic activities relating to India.[104] He was "only too ready and anxious to be of any use to her" if he could.[105] He also sent Field some literature on "Communism in India" including a copy of the lecture delivered in Calcutta in 1926 by Saunders, Director of Military Intelligence in India, so that Mayo might use it if necessary.

Coatman was rapturous over the merit of the book. He thought the book "*will go into history and help to make history*". He was very angry with Jonathan Cape and with the big book-selling companies in England for sending so few copies of the book to India. They ought to have sent "the whole big edition out to India at once".[106]

[102] Extracts from letters received by Mayo, *ibid.*, Box 29.
[103] Dudley B. Myers to H. H. Field. 22 December 1927, *ibid.*
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Myers to Field, 3 May 1928, *ibid.*, Box 11.
[106] Coatman to Mayo, 29 September 1927, *ibid.*, Box 9.

J. H. Adam, for whose verdict Mayo was "cowering in a corner", was of course very glad at the possible effect on British reformers. "I am glad the book is out now as it will show an important side of affairs which has never been really understood or considered by our reformers", opined the policeman.[107]

Sir William S. Marris, the Governor of the United Provinces, who later joined the India Office, was certain that Mayo had "struck a shrewd blow for humanity and justice".[108]

Basil Blackett, the Finance Member of the Government of India, was sure that Mayo would have a "glorious" place in the annals of India. In a four-page-long handwritten letter from his office at Simla, he dilated upon the possible reaction in the United States, England and India. "In the USA you will sure win much sympathy for the difficulties of the English in their task in India", chuckled the Finance Member.[109]

The Viceroy too must have been very much pleased at this performance of an American. Out of glee, he lent his copy of *Mother India* to William L. Jenkins, the American Consul at Calcutta, who in turn, profusely congratulated Mayo on "the masterly fashion" in which she had handled her subject. He declared himself a "warm admirer" of the book.[110]

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION ON "MOTHER INDIA"

The most ecstatic praise for *Mother India* was the one expressed by a review of the book in the *New Statesman*, a journal then regarded as one of the representative organs of leftism and radicalism in England.[111] The review regarded it as "certainly the most important and truthful book that

107 Adam to Mayo, 30 June 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.
108 William S. Marris to Mayo, 26 December 1927, *ibid.*, Box 10.
109 Basil Blackett to Mayo, 29 June 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.
110 William L. Jenkins to Mayo, 17 January 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.
111 *New Statesman*, vol. 29, 16 July 1927, pp. 448-49. Reprint of this review was widely distributed by Jonathan Cape, London, the publishers of *Mother India*. This review also attracted wide attention in India and exacerbated the sore feelings of the Indians.

has been written about India for a good deal more than a generation". It concurred with Mayo that English officials and even English missionaries had never cared to write quite frankly about India, because of the possible disastrous repercussions of such frankness upon their work out there. Not so with Miss Mayo:

> Miss Mayo. however, as an American—naturally inclined to be critical of the British *raj*—had no such qualms. She tells without reticence what she has seen. And the picture she draws is so appalling that no civilized reader could fail to hope that its horrors are exaggerated. *But they are not.* The documented narrative is completely convincing; so convincing that it is hard to think of any adequate answer even to the statement to Miss Mayo by one of the most eminent of European International Public Health Authorities: "It is a question of adaptation and of evolution of sub-grade of existence on which they [the Hindus] now survive. The British are to blame for the world threat which they now constitute [as a breeding ground for disease]. If the British had not protected them the virile races of the north would have wiped them out."

The reviewer referred to the filthy habits and prejudices of the Hindus, and regretted that one could get no help in the matter of fighting out these prejudices even from the "Gandhis or the Tagores, for they have not the courage to challenge the traditions of their degenerate race". Outdoing Mayo, he sharply posed the question whether the British ought to maintain the peace in India enabling the population of India, especially "the more degenerate sections", to increase or to leave India and let "the Mahrattas and the other warlike (and mostly Moslem) races work their will upon the Hindu cow-dung-eating sexual debauches of the plains". Repeating the same question subsequently and expressing the hopelessness about the prospect of democracy in India, the editor of the journal wrote:

> Is it really a good thing that a race of this type should be artificially preserved and enabled to breed freely in their

teens—by the 70,000 trained English soldiers whom we keep there? It is a tremendous question. And it is a question which we think the ordinary reader of Miss Mayo's book will find it hard to answer in the affirmative. He will feel that these religious baby-violators ought to be wiped off the face of the earth, as they almost certainly would be if we withdrew our troops from the North-West frontier. It cannot be easy for the democracy of Great Britain, who are the constitutional rulers of India, to grasp facts of this kind. They naturally cannot believe that men who use the rhetoric of Mazzini are willing, for purposes of ritual, to eat the excrement of a cow. In short, the whole question seems to be insoluble. There appears to be no rational possibility of democracy in India... She [Mayo] makes the claim for *Swaraj* seem nonsense and the will to grant it almost a crime.[112]

Edward Thompson, who reviewed the book in another important leftist journal, the *Nation & Athenaeum*, too found it "hard to respect a people who through millenniums have thought as Indians have on this question of the sexes and of sex, and who are so imbecilely complacent about their thinking". He thought that "Hinduism is beneath contempt in its worship of the male and its sex obsession generally". His only regret was that Mayo had allowed her otherwise "magnificent" case to be lost in a "welter of general condemnation" in the latter part of the book.[113]

The British Conservative opinion lost no time in recognising the political implications of the book. Lord Meston reviewed the book in *The Spectator* and pointed out that Mayo had done the same good to the Indians that she had earlier done to the Filipinos through her book *The Isles of Fear.* While mildly critical of the "too sweeping" indictment of the Hindu society in the book, he expressed his confidence that she would render much valuable service if she could convince some of the thoughtless enthusiasts—presumably

[112] *Ibid.*, p. 449. Emphasis added. The reviewer ("C.S.") was the editor of this journal.

[113] *Nation & Athenaeum* (London), vol. 41, 30 July 1927, pp. 581-82.

both British and Indian—who "rant about immediate emancipation" of India that until the evils of Indian life were combated by an enlightened public opinion in the country itself, India could hardly hope to take the place that she ought to occupy in the family of nations.[114]

The British diehards did not fail to make use of the opportunity to link up the discussion on the political advancement of India (touched off by the appointment of the Simon Commission) with the lessons thrown up by *Mother India.* M. F. O'Dwyer, during whose governorship of the Punjab the Amritsar massacre had taken place in 1919, wrote an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in which he discussed these matters.[115] He took into account the evils of the Indian society as revealed by *Mother India* and hoped that the Simon Commission would be able to avoid the mistakes of the Reforms of 1919.

The *Saturday Review* spelt out in clear terms the moral of the book. Emphasising the need to put off making political concessions to India, it advised:

> But the basic fact is that India is not socially fit for self-government... Surely it is incumbent on this country [Great Britain] to postpone political concession until social conditions improve, until there is some guarantee that the new powers given to Indians will not be used to perpetuate the gross evils at which we have glanced. We must not betray India under pretext of giving her a political boon.[116]

Although London *Times* detected some signs of overstatement in the book, it found the book "extraordinarily well informed and generally careful". It did not fail to underline the political implication of what Mayo had said about the built-in weakness of the Hindus. "...many will doubtless read with concern her [Mayo's] grave warning of what may happen when the fierce Mussalman tribes of the North are

[114] *The Spectator*, vol. 139, 16 July 1927, pp. 99-100.

[115] Sir M. F. O'Dwyer. "Mother India—Swaraj and Social Reform". *Fortnightly Review*, February 1928, pp. 171-82.

[116] *Saturday Review* as cited in *Modern Review* (Calcutta), vol. 42, September 1927, p. 361.

let loose upon a self-governing India", it pointed out.[117] Naturally it refused to publish a joint letter by such eminent Indian statesmen as Tej Bahadur Sapru, Atual Chandra Chatterjee, R. P. Paranjpye and several others in which they had drawn the attention of the British public to the wide publicity being given to the book in the British Press to the "obvious detriment of India at this juncture".[118]

Thus, British opinion, in general, was highly appreciative of *Mother India* although some of the reviewers tempered their appreciation with a criticism of the oversimplification and exaggeration found in the book.[119] To some extent, the book was effective in hardening the attitude of some British liberals in the matter of granting constitutional concessions to India, and to that extent, at least, one of the objectives of Mayo's British patrons was fulfilled.

[117] *Times* (London), 22 July 1927.

[118] For the text of the letter see C. S. Ranga Iyer, *Father India: A Reply to Mother India* (London, 1929), pp. 193-35.

[119] Indian opinion, however, was greatly gratified when they found that at least one great British journal, the *Manchester Guardian*, criticised the book and came to almost the same conclusion as Gandhi when it wrote that it was "a book for India to remember and for the West to forget". It also emphatically repudiated the implied morale that the backwardness of India in the sphere of social reform justified the continuance of its political subjection. See *Manchester Guardian*, 20 August 1927.

Chapter Three

"MOTHER INDIA" AND THE AMERICANS

ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION AND MAYO

In his review of two books—C. S. Ranga Iyer's *Father India* and K. Natarajan's *Miss Mayo's Mother India*—in *The Nation*, the reviewer, W. Norman Brown, referred to a speech made by Katherine Mayo at the Contemporary Club in Philadelphia some time earlier. In this speech she is reported to have said that she once met two officers of the Rockefeller Foundation who suggested to her that she should go out to India so that she could effectively present a picture of the menace that India posed to the health of the world. Brown, therefore, expressed the view that the Rockefeller Foundation should throw light on the part it had played in the Mayo mission.[1]

One B. B. Mundkur met George E. Vincent, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, and brought to his notice the statements made by W. Norman Brown on the alleged complicity of the Foundation in Mayo's work. Vincent categorically denied that the Foundation had ever had anything to do with Mayo:

> ...the Rockefeller Foundation has had nothing whatever to do with Miss Mayo as an investigator or a writer, has had no request of her, has offered no suggestion, has paid no money to her, and has had no connection of any kind with her books.

[1] *The Nation*, vol. 127, 15 August 1928, pp. 160-61.

Vincent further told Mundkur that two men connected with the Foundation, independently of each other, had met Mayo in her own house, that they had, on Mayo's initiative and enquiry, suggested international health as an important and promising field in which she could work, that they had recommended the health section of the League of Nations as the chief source of information on this subject, and that one of them had also described India, in general terms, as a country in which modern preventive medicine had to overcome unusual difficulties.[2]

This looks so innocuous. However, an examination of Mayo's private papers leaves one with the impression that the matter was not as simple as all that.

Records show that first of all, Vincent, using the stationery of the Rockefeller Foundation, had given Mayo a strong letter of recommendation addressed to the British Minister of Health, Major Greenwood. He had requested the British Minister to grant an interview to Mayo and had vouchsafed that she would be *"in every way interesting and agreeable"*.[3] Fortified with this letter, Mayo had gone to London in October 1925.

Secondly, there is incontrovertible evidence to show that when Mayo was in India, she had kept in constant touch with Kendrich, the representative of the Rockefeller Foundation in India, most probably stationed in Madras. That Kendrich had played some part in educating Mayo with regard to conditions in India is evident from the fact that she had had interviews with him and that she had received from him a copy of his "Report on [His] Visit to Bengal during the Period July 18 to 27" of 1925.[4] Further, in the Mayo Collection there is a copy of a report entitled "Visit to Santi-Niketan, the Site of the Visva-Bharati". This is certainly a report on Mayo's own visit to Santiniketan. The final sentence of this report reads as follows:

[2] *Ibid.*, 14 November 1928, p. 521.

[3] Vincent to Major Greenwood, 16 September 1925, Mayo Collection, Box 7. Emphasis added.

[4] *Ibid.*, Box 50.

> If, therefore, the Foundation ever considers giving assistance to the institutions for medical education in India I would certainly recommend that education in public health nursing be included in the programme.[5]

It is evident that the Foundation mentioned here is no other than the Rockefeller Foundation. Could it be that in some form or other, Mayo had been authorised to make an investigation on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation and that it was in this capacity that she had submitted her report and recommendation to the Foundation? If so, would it be unreasonable to assume that the expense of her Indian venture had been borne, either fully or in part, by the Rockefeller Foundation?

What gives room for suspicion is another item in the Mayo Collection to which we have already alluded. We have seen that Mayo first decided to submit the manuscript of her book to Lord Winterton, Under Secretary of State for India in London. Later she changed her mind on the advice of J. H. Adam, the policeman. She, of course, could not tell the Lord that one of his policemen in India had instructed her not to submit the manuscript to him. She had to assuage the fears of the Lord, and offer an explanation. She, therefore, wrote a letter. Pleading with the Lord not to worry overmuch on the score of his not having read the manuscript in advance, she told him:

> You may like to know that the book rests ... on a physiological and sanitary base and *Dr. V. G. H. ... has carefully read ... and approved the mss. although the policies of his Foundation prevents his giving the public use of his name as having done so.*[6]

Dr. V.G.H. was none else than Victor George Heiser, Associate Director of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, and the "Foundation" mentioned above was no other organisation than the Rockefeller

[5] "Visit to Santi-Niketan. the Site of the Visva-Bharati". *Ibid.*
[6] Mayo to Lord Winterton, 6 February 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8. Emphasis added.

Foundation. This had to be concealed! One wishes, however, that it would have been better if the President of the Rockefeller Foundation had not made a sweeping denial to Mundkur.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE PHILIPPINES AND MAYO

The President of the Rockefeller Foundation was not alone in taking interest in Mayo's work. When she brought out her book, *The Isles of Fear*, Leonard Wood, Governor-General of the Philippines, had shown great interest in her work. "It [*The Isles of Fear*] has brought home the truth to many thousands of people and has done a great deal of good in riveting attention upon the Philippines." He had thus tried to instill confidence in Mayo.[7]

Perhaps to remind her further of the good work she had done to the American interest in the Philippines, he had, hardly two weeks later, asked one of his friends in New York to remember him most cordially to Miss Mayo and tell her "she has done more than she realized to help out the situation here".[8]

Mayo had left for India in October 1925 with such encouragement. Naturally on her way back to America, she could not resist the temptation of writing to her friend, the Governor-General of the Philippines. She narrated to him some of her experiences. This reminded the Governor-General of the exalted mood in which his great friend, Theodore Roosevelt, had, as President of America, showered praise on British achievements in India. The Governor-General replied to Mayo in the same vein:

> I have always wanted to go to India when I had time enough at my disposal to see something of the country and its administration. I feel that England has done in India one of the world's greatest work for humanity. Like many another [*sic*] great work it is not understood or appreciated by many of the people but that is one of the tra-

[7] Leonard Wood to Mayo, 16 September 1925, *ibid.*, Box 7.
[8] Wood to F. B. Kirkbride, 29 September 1925, *ibid.*

> gedies of life which must be expected by all who work for others.[9]

The Governor-General agreed that her experience in India was certainly "wonderful". "I shall look forward with interest to reading the result of your observations when you publish them."[10] Mayo thus could rest assured of the Governor-General's interest in her work on India.

AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND MAYO

While Mayo was in India, some American officials took interest in her work. She got in touch with J. G. Lay. the American Consul General in Calcutta. Lay gave Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, a copy of *The Isles of Fear*,[11] and the Governor asked him to introduce Mayo to some important officials of the Government of Bengal.

Another American Consul at Calcutta, William L. Jenkins, could hardly contain his joy when *Mother India* came out. He had been lent a copy of the book by the Viceroy himself, and since then he had been itching to congratulate Mayo on her achievement. He, in fact, very much wanted to join her in vanquishing those Americans who were critical of her book:

> I understand from my friend Harvey Watts that at a meeting of the Contemporary Club you completely vanquished opponents such as Rufus Jones and the very misguided Dr. Jesse Holmes. I should have liked very much to be there but I know that you need no backing up.[12]

C. C. Batchelder, a former Trade Commissioner for the United States in India, appears to have been of considerable use to Mayo in the matter of collection of material. He gave her some information which she incorporated in *Mother India* without referring to him as the source. For example, it was Batchelder who gave her the story of the Dewan of

[9] Wood to Mayo, 9 July 1926, *ibid.*, Box 8. This was in reply to Mayo's of 14 May 1926, which is not in the files.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] See J. G. Lay to Mayo. 5 February 1926, *ibid.*
[12] William L. Jenkins to Mayo, 17 January 1928. *ibid.*, Box 10.

an Indian Prince remarking that if the English went, within three months of their departure not a rupee or a virgin would be left in all Bengal.[13] It was, again, he, the "trained American observer", who described to her the pitiable lot of the Hindus in the Malabar Hills in the wake of the Moplah rebellion.[14]

Naturally, Batchelder was full of praise when the book came out:

> I have never happened to see anything to equal it. You have the gift of making statistics interesting and everywhere there are proofs of careful research enough to warrant a Ph.D. from any fair-minded college... I do not detect even a questionable point... I think you have done a real service to the world in sweeping away the mirage caused by deceitful propaganda and to India.[15]

Later, Batchelder told her that *Mother India* might well be the "most influential book in India of our century". He was so impressed with the book and so convinced of its utility even in the United States, that he urged the officials of the League for Political Education in New York to invite Mayo for a talk on India.[16]

INTEREST OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY

Some American businessmen also interested themselves in Mayo's trip to India. On 8 October 1925, Mayo wrote to C. F. Meyer, Vice-President of the Standard Oil Company of New York, informing him of her winter trip through India. Meyer noted this with great interest and assured her:

> If your presentation [as to conditions in India] is even approximately as successful as your work on the Philippines, it will be a great service to the world at large, as well as to Americans.[17]

[13] *Mother India*, p. 282. See also C. C. Batchelder to Mayo, 14 April 1928. Mayo Collection, Box 11.
[14] *Mother India*, p. 293. See also Batchelder to Mayo, n. 13.
[15] Batchelder to Mayo, 10 July 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.
[16] Batchelder to Mayo, 14 April 1928, *ibid.*
[17] C. F. Meyer to Mayo, 22 October 1925, *ibid.*, Box 7.

Meyer did not fail to send Mayo a letter of introduction addressed to Walter F. Guthrie, the Company's General Manager in India, stationed at Calcutta.

When Mayo got in touch with Guthrie in Calcutta, he explained to her the various features of the Indian situation, and declared:

> There is really no just accusation against the British. Many of them may have made money out of India... but they have made famine impossible through building railways, and that they have done a great deal for the vast majority and what they do for themselves is not to be compared with what they have done for the good of the country...[18]

CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN JOURNALISTS

Mayo did not neglect to keep some prominent American journalists informed of her project on India. She also introduced John Coatman, the officer in the House Department of the Government of India who looked after British propaganda in the United States, to the editor of the *New York Times*.[19] Coatman naturally grabbed at this opportunity and recorded his gratefulness to Mayo.[20] He, in fact, told Mayo that he was also in touch with her friend Ellery Sedgwick, the editor of the well-known American journal, the *Atlantic Monthly*.[21]

On her return to the United States Mayo felt that she should ask Sedgwick to help her build up public support for *Mother India*. But Sedgwick counselled caution. He warned Mayo against enlisting the support of British journalists in the matter, for, in that case, the book might be regarded as a part of organised British propaganda. He, however, did not disappoint her. He said: "...the whole subject of public opinion in this matter is so complex that it is useless to dis-

[18] Notes from the dinner with Walter F. Guthrie. 19 February 1926, *ibid.*, Box 50.

[19] Coatman to Mayo, 24 February 1926. *ibid.*, Box 8.

[20] Coatman to Mayo, 11 March 1926, *ibid.*, Box 51.

[21] *Ibid.*

cuss it in a letter. When I come to New York I shall surely hope to see you."[22]

SUPPORT OF SOME INTERESTED GROUPS

Despite Sedgwick's warning, Mayo went ahead with her plan to organise public support for *Mother India*. She succeeded in securing the support of some interested groups in these endeavours. Naturally enough, these groups advised the Americans that if they paid heed to the wise pronouncements found in the pages of this book, they would be contributing greatly to their own vital interests. For example, Mrs B. L. Robinson, President of the Massachusetts Public Interest League, whose declared aim was to prevent socialist legislation in the United States, found the book useful in two ways. First of all, it could be used to show that if the Soviet propaganda in favour of India's freedom from British rule succeeded, a country so weak as India would fall immediate prey to the communists and that with the wealth of India added to their present resources, their menace to the world would be overwhelming. Secondly, it could be used to expose such movements as "The League of Neighbours", "Union of East and West", and Annie Besant's theosophy, which in her view, were out to put the "degrading" religion of India on a par with or above the Christian religion, thus doing great harm to the Americans.[23]

Robinson told Mayo that she would urge intelligent American women to read the book. She also promised to interpret it to those women who would not take the trouble of reading it themselves.[24]

Later, a public meeting was held in Boston under the auspices of this organisation, with Mayo as the principal speaker. She violently denounced Indian politicians and the "Swamis, Yogis and travelling teaching men" of India who regarded America as their "largest and richest hunting ground".[25] The

[22] Ellery Sedgwick to Mayo, 23 February 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.
[23] B. L. Robinson to Mayo, 4 August 1927, *ibid.*, Box 9.
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] Press release prepared by H. H. Field, *ibid.*, Box 29.

Cosmos Newspaper Syndicate of New York too took advantage of Mayo's forensic abilities and circulated one of her speeches entitled, "When Asia Knocks at the Door". In this speech Mayo warned the Americans that they must "stiffen" their sensibilities and give no quarters to the degraded Hindus "for the sake of the safety of our homes, for the sake of the preservation of our standards".[26]

Daughters of the American Revolution did not lag behind in realising the potentiality of *Mother India.* The New Jersey State Chairman of its National Defense Committee (A.C. Benedict) got in touch with Mayo and prepared to make good use of her services.[27]

Thus some important American officers and public men took keen interest in Mayo's work both before and after the publication of *Mother India.*

"MOTHER INDIA" AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION

From the very start *Mother India* greatly impressed American opinion. When Mayo sent her preliminary draft of the book to her prospective publishers, the Harcourt, Brace and Company of New York, they were delighted: "It most certainly *is* a book", wrote back A. Harcourt, the President of the Company. He also predicted that the book would "create a stir and do good for many years".[28]

When the book was published in June 1927, it was widely reviewed by American journals and newspapers. The *American Political Science Review* wondered how, in view of the conditions depicted by Mayo, there could be any one alive at all in India, to say nothing of its teeming millions. The book was "a sort of chamber of unhygienic horrors", it commented in disgust.[29]

This feeling of horror at the reading of the book was expressed by others also. A. Harcourt, in his letter already

[26] Release of the Cosmos Newspaper Syndicate, Inc., New York, N. Y., *ibid.*

[27] A. C. Benedict to Mayo, 3 January 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.

[28] A. Harcourt to Mayo, 24 January 1927, *ibid.*, Box 8.

[29] *American Political Science Review*, vol. 21, November 1927, p. 916.

cited, had written that he could not thoroughly read chapter VIII, entitled "Mother India", which dealt with child-wives and the conditions of child-birth, as it was too terrible for him to read word by word. The reviewer of the *Atlantic Monthly* could scarcely sleep at night after she had read *Mother India*.[30] The *American Journal of Public Health and Nation's Health* also described the book as one full of "unintentional horror".[31]

By and large, the book was well received by American journals and newspapers, and it succeeded to a great extent in producing the desired effect on the American mind. The New York weekly *The Outlook* highly eulogised the book, and described it as "free from sentimentalism, partisanship, and preconceived notions". It felt that the Americans had now a new standard by which to judge the teaching of Hindu philosophy. It said that when "suave gentlemen" from India preached their "mystic messages" before women's clubs and "select circles of those who have nothing better to do", they should be asked to account for the facts presented in *Mother India*. It ridiculed the view that this book should be dismissed as British propaganda, and declared that Great Britain's achievements were not to be measured in terms of any one generation, but in comparison with the magnitude of the task undertaken. "The magnitude of that enterprise", it contended, "is to be spoken of as one speaks of a geologic epoch."[32]

A great many Americans felt that apart from exposing Indian mysticism as a "morass of mud",[33] the book had established the need for continued British rule in India: "With the facts in *Mother India* available, there will henceforth be no excuse for criticism of the administration of the British or even of their presence in India at all, in terms of doctrinaire idealism."[34] *The Independent* went a step ahead and

[30] *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston, Mass.), vol. 140, August 1927.

[31] *American Journal of Public Health and Nation's Health* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 17, October 1927, p. 1063.

[32] *The Outlook* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 146, 22 June 1927, p. 241.

[33] *New York Times*, 5 June 1927, pp. 1, 25.

[34] *Chicago Evening Post*, 10 June 1927.

wrote in a forthright way that *Mother India* had proved that "India lacked independence because she is incapable of anything else".[25] And the *Nashville Tennessean* commented that the American reader would thank his stars that India was not his problem. It wrote:

> When he has shuddered at the horrors of her description of childbirth, when he has observed the childlike deliberations of the native parliamentary body, when he has sensed the delicate balance which holds mob mania in control... he will be glad that India is Britain's problem and not his own, 100 per cent American though he may be. And he is likely to throw his theosophy book out of the window and wash his hands.[26]

In the view of the *New York Herald Tribune*, the potential value of Mayo's book was that it went farther than any other book had yet dared to go towards revealing the degradation of the Indian social system. The book, in its opinion, presented facts which might easily be denied but could not be disproved or shaken. The "calm, hard-headed—though not hard-hearted—style" in which the author presented her evidence made the conviction all the more ghastly, it commented.[27]

The *New York Times* published a long review by P. W. Wilson under a 4-column caption, "INDIA HER OWN WORST ENEMY", with a sub-caption, "Miss Mayo's Challenging Study Arrives at the Conclusion". The review approvingly summarised the substance of *Mother India* and painted a horrid picture of Indian customs and manners. It conceded that in discussing the health of India, one should not forget that the hygiene the Westerners were accustomed to had been developed only at a recent date. But it added:

> In the dirt of India, there is, however, a persistence which differentiates it from the dirt of Europe. If Christendom has been unclean, the reason is a sin of omission. India is

[25] *The Independent* (Boston, Mass.), 25 June 1927.
[26] *Nashville Tennessean*, 10 July 1927.
[27] *Books* (*New York Herald Tribune*), 12 June 1927, p. 1.

unclean as an act of piety. The Ganges at Benares flows with filth, yet it is worshipped as a river of redemption.[38]

The reviewer held that the detachment of the author was "obvious" and that the facts Mayo had brought to light were not likely to be disputed.

Thus the book was taken as a treatise on the situation in India. It was acknowledged as having proved that Indians were incapable of self-rule and that British rule was necessary to clean up the society. What was worse, it made the average reader feel that the picture he was getting from this book, written by an author who was "neither muck-racker, sobsister, alarmist, nor propagandist",[39] was basic to the Indian civilisation and character and that India, nay the whole of the East, was fundamentally different from the West. "I confess I learned more from this book on the inner Indian and why the East is East than I ever knew before", wrote Leon Whipple, while reviewing it in *The Survey*.[40]

How deep an impression the book made on the American mind can be gauged from the fact that even the *New Republic*, which was traditionally pro-Indian, editorially advised the Indian critics that they would get a better hearing, if instead of indulging in vituperation against the author, they could show that some of the statistical statements made in the book were incorrect. It took cognisance of Gandhi's article in the *Young India* on 15 September 1927 characterising the book as a "Drain Inspector's Report", but pointed out that Gandhi had not refuted any of the more important allegations made by Mayo, especially those relating to the treatment of women and children in India.[41]

This, however, does not mean that *Mother India* had a uniformly favourable reception in the United States. The liberal and traditionally pro-Indian journals were, of course, critical of the book and regarded it as offensive. Although

[38] *New York Times*, 5 June 1927.
[39] *Books*, n. 37.
[40] *The Survey* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 58, 1 August 1927, p. 469.
[41] *New Republic*, vol. 52, 19 October 1927, p. 222.

the *New Republic* advised the Indian critics of Mayo to be less vituperative and more attentive to facts; it also published a review which maintained that Mayo, despite her correctness as to a great part of the "facts", had drawn a picture which was on the whole "profoundly untrue". "It is a libel upon a unique civilization and a people of extraordinary virtue, patience and spiritual quality", the reviewer said.[42] The review in *The Nation* was entitled "Carbolic Acid for India". The reviewer, W. Norman Brown, maintained:

> We cannot say that this book reveals itself as the product of a reflective mind. Miss Mayo made of herself a kind of journeying camera through India, selecting for preservation the most horrible and striking scenes that are quickly recorded. But she never gets under the surface to seek for causes in order that suitable remedies may be prescribed.[43]

The Chicago weekly *Unity*, edited by Reverend John Haynes Holmes, the paster of the Community Church in New York, regarded the book as "utterly unreliable, even deliberately wicked" with a "clear purpose of portraying India as an uncivilized country".[44]

In some scholarly journals, too, serious reservations were made. For instance, writing in the *Yale Review*, R. E. Hume expressed the opinion that the picture of India drawn by Mayo was "distorted" and "offensive". He expressed the hope that some day there would arise a great Indian author or authoress who would, with a manifest love for India and with a better knowledge of facts, present a more "winsome and accurate picture of the national difficulties and also the national successes". "In the meantime", he stated, "the West must turn elsewhere for more accurate and more comprehensive information."[45]

Even the reviewer in the *New York Times*, while highly appreciative of the book, had doubted whether Mayo had

[42] *Ibid.*, 21 September 1927. The reviewer was S. K. Ratcliffe, the British journalist.

[43] *The Nation*, vol. 125, 13 July 1927. p. 40.

[44] *Unity* (Chicago, III.), vol. 100, 26 December 1927, p. 248.

[45] *Yale Review*, n.s. 17, January 1928, p. 377.

stated her facts "in their true proportion". He had asked: "Having seen life in India, has she seen it whole?"[46]

Thus, it can be said that a section of the liberal press and some scholarly journals were critical or reserved in their opinion of *Mother India*. On balance, however, American opinion regarded the book as unbiassed, objective and truthful, and congratulated Mayo. In any case, the book succeeded in raising widespread discussion in the United States about various facets of life in India. Mayo was sought after by the press for interview, requested by journals for articles and invited by organisations and universities for talks. The result of all this was that *Mother India* emerged as one of the best known and most widely read books in America.

Soon enough *Mother India* became one of the best-sellers in the US market. However, it should be remembered that the popularity of the book was not solely due to the fact that it was taken as a "truthful" book on India as such. The book had other charms also. *The Outlook*, which had editorially praised the book and had taken an interest in recording its growing popularity, once reported that while a quarter of the book's readers were interested in India, the other three-quarters found it pornographic. In fact, the readers had been told that they would find it so.[47] *Mother India* was certainly capable of catering to the taste for pornographic and sensational literature which had a large market in the United States.

[46] *New York Times*, n. 33.
[47] *The Outlook*, vol. 148, 11 January 1928, pp. 75-76.

Chapter Four

"MOTHER INDIA" AND AFTER

CRITICISMS INFLAME MAYO'S PASSION

The publication of *Mother India* immediately drew protests from Indians, and a number of replies were published one after another.[1] *A Son of Mother India Answers* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji even became, according to a report published in *The Outlook*, one of the five best-sellers among non-fiction books in the United States temporarily eclipsing *Mother India* in its popularity.[2]

Some clergymen also came out with statements or articles denouncing *Mother India*. The Executive Committee of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon said in a statement that they "unhesitatingly assert that the

[1] Some of the important replies by Indians or non-Indians were the following:

(a) K. Natarajan. *Miss Mayo's Mother India: A Rejoinder* (Madras, 1928).
(b) C. S. Ranga Iyer, *Father India* (London, 1928).
(c) World "Citizen", *Sister India* (Bombay, 1928).
(d) Lala Lajpat Rai, *Unhappy India* (Calcutta, 1928).
(e) Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *A Son of Mother India Answers* (New York, 1928).
(f) J. A. Chapman, *India: Its Character—A reply to "Mother India"* (Oxford. 1928).
(g) Ernest Wood. *An Englishman Defends Mother India: A Complete Reply to "Mother India"* (Madras, 1929).

[2] *The Outlook*, 15 March 1928, p. 433. Francis Lamont Robbins. editor of the section. "Speaking of Books", hailed the appearance of the book on the list of best-sellers as a "capable and temperate answer to *Mother India*" and commended it to the readers of the latter.

picture of India which emerges from Miss Mayo's book is untrue to the facts and unjust to the people of India".[3] Seven eminent American missionaries in India, too, came out with a statement protesting unhesitatingly and vigorously against the offensiveness of Mayo's book and expressing their "sense of humiliation that an American should write with such unfairness and apparent prejudice in presenting India".[4] Moreover, Reverend Alden H. Clark, a graduate of the Amherst College and a missionary in India for seventeen years, wrote a long article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, refuting the basic assertions of Mayo in *Mother India*.[5]

All this enkindled the crusading spirit of Mayo, and she joined the fray with vigour and determination. As already stated, she wrote to her friend "L.O.B." that she had begun "to *feel* the new book" and that "there will be work to do in England". Accordingly, she, along with her indefatigable assistant H. H. Field, visited England in the first half of 1928 and lost no time in getting into touch with her friends in the official and nonofficial circles there. Approaches were made to several persons who had previously served in India in one capacity or another for material for Mayo's new book. Among the persons approached was William S. Marris, who was then a member of the India Council at the India Office and who had been Governor of the United Provinces while Mayo was in India. Though Marris was convinced that Mayo "would give consideration to any ideas which I might submit to you", he considered it unwise for

[3] For the text of this statement, see J. T. Sunderland, *India in Bondage* (New York, 1932), revd. edn., p. 550.

[4] For the text of the statement, see *ibid.*, pp. 550-51. The statement was made by Fred B. Fisher, Bishop, Methodist Episcopal Church, Calcutta; Alden H. Clark, missionary, American Congregational Mission, Ahmednagar; Alice B. Van Doren, Secretary, National Christian Council of India, Poona; John J. De Doer, Principal, Voorhees College, Vellore; Mason Olcott, President, American Arcot Mission, Vellore; D. F. McClelland, General Secretary, YMCA, Madras; and E. Stanley Jones, Missionary, Sitapur, U.P.

[5] Alden H. Clark, "Is India Dying?: A Reply to *Mother India*", *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 141, February 1928, pp. 271-79.

her to bring out another book when the tempers were very high in India. He advised her to wait for a year or so before she published her second book.[6]

MORE AMMUNITION SUPPLIED

Work on the projected book, however, went on apace in England. Former civil servants like J. C. Pringle prepared drafts of stories showing the seamy side of the Indian character and checked and rechecked the material selected for inclusion in the book.[7]

In the meantime, Mayo sought help from her friends in India who were only too happy to supply her with more material. An example is afforded by the response of H. Graham, Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal, in this matter. He had been a District Magistrate in Bengal and had assisted Mayo considerably during her visit to India. Now Mayo needed further material. Expressing joy at the prospect of making himself useful in so holy a crusade, Graham wrote to her from the Government House, Darjeeling:

> You ask for some ammunition. I was delighted to hear that you are so full of vim as to be all out for a go at the opposition.[8]

He furnished all information sought by Mayo and promised more.

COMMUNAL USE OF "MOTHER INDIA"

The British officers whom Mayo employed in the collection of material did not even hesitate to encourage this American lady to widen the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. Mayo was very particular about winning the applause of those Muslims who were opposed to the nationalist movement, and she, therefore, eagerly awaited their

[6] Mayo's second book on India, *Slaves of the Gods*, came out in 1929, *Mother India* having been published in mid-1927.

[7] As a member of the Indian Civil Service, J. C. Pringle had served in Sind during 1896-1901.

[8] H. Graham to Mayo, 17 April 1928, Mayo Collection, Box 11.

verdict on *Mother India*. On her behalf Graham got into touch with the communalist Muslim press. He wrote to Syed Erfan Ali of the *Moslem Chronicle* of Calcutta who promptly informed him that his journal had published a leading article in favour of *Mother India*. He also confided: "*We are in touch with Miss Mayo and got a present copy of her book which we intend to review shortly.*"[9]

The Governor's Private Secretary (Graham) was not alone in perceiving the usefulness of *Mother India* in further dividing the Hindus from the Muslims in India. He had a redoubtable friend in the policeman J. H. Adam. Adam wrote to Mayo: "Muslims have welcomed the book—and look on the book as a splendid attack on Hinduism... [and] that is why they want to publish it in Hindustani." And he advised her to let them publish a translation:

> I don't think there is any harm in allowing them to translate the book *even though they may want to do it for purpose of communal conflict.*[10]

The policeman in J. H. Adam did not bat an eyelid in offering a piece of advice which he knew in all conscience to be subversive of law and order.

HEIGHT OF WICKEDNESS

To what wicked length Mayo and her British collaborators went in their hatred for Hinduism is illustrated by a few more papers in the Mayo Collection.

As already stated, Mayo and her assistant Field were in London in the summer of 1928 collecting material for her next book on India. This next book was going to be a book of stories from "real life" to illustrate the evil practices described in *Mother India*. An important source of information in this matter was J. C. Pringle. At Mayo's request, Pringle outlined three stories whose main characters were Hashim, Nur Mohomed and Makhdum, all Muslims. From these stories Pringle hoped to illustrate the prevalence of cruelty

[9] Syed Erfan Ali to Graham, 18 April 1928, *ibid.*
[10] Adam to Mayo, 19 January 1928, *ibid.*, Box 10.

and oppression—the oppression of the weak by the strong—which ran through India and from which it followed that the real task of the white man in India was to protect the weak from the strong.[11]

Pringle gave details of two stories, Hashim and Makhdum. Hashim, a powerful man, had seduced the beautiful wife of a humble neighbour, and later suborned a group of his intimates to kill this man. However, Hashim and his acomplices could not be convicted for lack of fool-proof evidence. Some of the culprits fled to Benares to worship at the shrines there.

The Makhdum story was as follows: Makhdum (a *pir* or holy man) was a young man who lived in a famous shrine and commanded the unswerving loyalty of his adherents to such an extent that they were willing to do anything for him, even to commit a crime if he so desired them. He coveted the young and beautiful wife of a cobbler and wanted to sleep with her without any protest from any quarter. So he murdered the cobbler in an unspeakably horrible manner. This was the sixteenth murder to be committed by him. In spite of intimidation of the witnesses by his disciples, a case was filed against him and the Session Judge found him guilty and pronounced the death sentence on him. Makhdum immediately appealed to the superior Appellate Court. This Court quashed the sentence passed by the Session Judge, so that Makhdum, fully exonerated, rode back in glory to his shrine.[12] Pringle did not fail to mention that the superior Appellate Court was headed by an Indian.

Mayo went through these stories outlined by Pringle. On a separate sheet of paper she made a few queries with a view to seeking clarification of some vague points here and there. She also wanted to make the stories more effective. At one place she noted:

"P. 4—the Hashim Case, any Gandhi story".

[11] Introductory Note by J. C. Pringle in reply to H. H. Field's Questions, *ibid.*, Box 53.

[12] Notes from dictation by J. C. Pringle, *ibid.*

At another place she noted:

"Makhdum story—could I make this a Hindu guru?"[13]

These notings by Mayo illustrate how her mind was working. First of all, she was too eager to weave some stories which could help her in denigrating Gandhi and his followers. Secondly, she was out to discredit the Hindus. She would stick at nothing and would even distort the stroies to suit her purposes. H. H. Field sent these queries to Pringle, and Pringle, who, on his retirement from the Indian Civil Service had become Reverend J. C. Pringle and Chaplain of the Royal College of St. Katherine, felt absolutely no compunction in changing all the Muslim names for Hindu names, so that all those stories could illustrate the inhumanity of the Hindus rather than of the Muslims. "Hashim" yielded place to "Lachman Singh", and "Makhdum" became "Goswamiji". To leave no doubt as to the implication of this change, Pringle noted in the margin: "I give this name [Lachman] to Hasim in order to make a Hindu of him." It was also made clear that the name "Goswamiji" was Hindu.[14]

Could there be a better example of the "impartiality" of this American "researcher", the "authenticity" of her source of information and the "truthfulness" and "piety" of this highly Christian soul of this English gentleman and former Indian Civil Service officer?

NO ABATEMENT IN MAYO'S HATRED FOR THE HINDUS

In fact, Mayo was so consumed with hatred for the Hindus that she returned to her pet theme again and again. In her next book, *Slaves of the Gods* (1929), she narrated twelve stories which, she claimed, had been taken from "real life".[15] Through these stories she tried to illustrate the degraded position of women and the untouchables in the Hindu society and the cruelty meted out by the Hindus to their children

[13] Query by Mayo on Pringle's Notes, *ibid.*

[14] Notes by Pringle, n. 12.

[15] Before she starts a story in the book, she writes a note declaring "This narrative is taken from real life".

and animals. "The quotations and stories serve to confirm the opinion that to be born a woman and a Hindu is about the worst fate that can befall a human being", wrote a reviewer in the *New York Times*.[16]

This was followed by *Volume Two* in 1931, *Mother India* being presumed to be Volume One. In this book, Mayo argued that her charges had been proved by the evidence laid before the Age of Consent Committee appointed by the Government of India in June 1928.[17] To show this, she reproduced all the evidence under various headings in her book. This, according to a reviewer in the *New York Times*, was so effective that one was left with the feeling that "the facts as presented in *Mother India* suffered understatement rather than overstatement".[18]

The last in the series was *The Face of Mother India* published in 1935. This was a pictorial book containing about four hundred photographs showing the various facets of the land of India and its people. Each photo was accompanied by an explanatory note with interesting comments showing the orientation of Mayo's mind. Moreover, the picture section was preceded by a long forty-page introduction in which Mayo traced Indian history from about A.D. 1000, when Mahmoud Ghazni, ruler of Afghanistan, began his raids in north-western India, the temple of Somnath being his special target. As regards her bias, it is best to quote F. H. Brown, who reviewed the book in *The Observer*:

> It is to be regretted that so suitable a Christmas gift of well-planned pictures should be introduced by a polemical dissertation which shows that these eight years have brought little or no abatement of Miss Mayo's sharply con-

[16] *New York Times*, 12 May 1929, section 4, p. 6.

[17] The Age of Consent Committee was appointed by the Government of India in June 1928 to examine the existing laws relating to the age of consent within and without martial state and recommend amendments thereto. The report of the Committee was published in August 1929. The evidence presented before the Committee gave a bizarre picture of the sexual atrocities committed on minor girls.

[18] *New York Times*, 10 May 1931, section 4, p. 3.

> trasted dislike of and contempt for the Hindu, the male Hindu at least, and her praise of the Moslem "the purest of Monotheists". In her judgment the Hindu has a double dose of original sin. If there is a hero of the story it is Mahmoud Ghazni, of whom she writes exultingly that he destroyed many great Hindu temples, shattered many idols, and took back to Ghazni many thousands of slaves and much precious treasure—"but never did he linger in the land of the idolator".[19]

In fact, not only the introduction, but the selection and presentation of the pictures themselves leave the following distinct impressions on the mind of the reader: (1) The British saved India from the invasion of the gallant North. (2) The British represented a constructive and modernising force in India. (3) The Hindus, the worshippers of Kali and a thousand other deities, were a degraded, filthy, superstitious, caste-ridden people who are a menace to world civilisation. (4) In contrast to the Hindus, the Muslims were brave, loyal to the one god, clean, simple and appreciative of the British sense of justice. (5) The British alone stood between the two inveterately warring groups in India, the Hindus and the Muslims. (6) Gandhi was an arch-seditionist and inciter of violence and terrorism in India.

MAYO'S TIRADE AGAINST GANDHI

It would be clear that, apart from the Hindu society, Mayo's special target of attack was Gandhi. We have already seen how he was exposed to sarcasm in *Mother India*.[20] But to have fuller view of this aspect of Mayo's project, let us go back to the beginning of our story and see how she treated Gandhi from the very start.

When she arrived in India, Mayo asked the Bishop of Calcutta to write to Gandhi about her visit to India and her wish to see him.[21] Gandhi promptly gave her an appointment

[19] *The Observer* (London), 8 December 1935.
[20] Supra, p. 25.
[21] See (Calcutta) Bishop's letter to Mayo, 25 February 1926, Mayo Collection, Box 8.

on 17 March at his Sabarmati Ashram.[22] On the appointed day, Mayo went to the Ashram and had a fairly long interview with Gandhi. Gandhi at the very start told Mayo that one set of Americans overrated the results of his noncooperation movement while another set not only underrated it but also imputed all kinds of motives to those who were concerned with the movement. He asked Mayo not to exaggerate one way or the other. In one of his subsequent letters to her, he said that she should take nothing for granted from whatever source it might come, Indian or European, pro-Indian or anti-Indian.[23] At the same time, he was very keen that she should understand aright what he had told her. When, therefore, she sent him the typescript of her interview with him he took pains to fill in the gaps and amplify some of the statements. Mayo also enquired about the source of Gandhi's information on the poverty in India. Gandhi sent her long quotations from the books of such authors as W. W. Hunter and Romesh Chunder Dutt and promised to send her more references, if required.[24]

In the interview itself, Gandhi made a very logical exposition of his view with regard to the spinning-wheel, the exploitation of the Indian resources by the British, the defect of the educational system introduced by the British in India, etc. He denounced the practice of untouchability prevalent in the Hindu society.[25]

The important question now is: To what extent and in what way did Mayo use the information and the views given to her by Gandhi? We have already seen how eagerly she used the information and the views given to her by her British friends. But she never used the information or sources given by Gandhi with regard to the poverty in India. She never mentions W. W. Hunter or Romesh Chunder Dutt even to controvert them! An ordinary reader of *Mother*

[22] Gandhi to Mayo, 4 March 1926, *ibid.*
[23] Gandhi to Mayo, 26 March 1926, *ibid.*
[24] These quotations were enclosed with Gandhi's letter to Mayo, 26 March 1926.
[25] For the full statement, see Appendix I.

India would never know that there were some recognised authors who laid the blame for the growing poverty of India at the door of the British authorities and vested interests.

The murky motivations of Mayo are fully exposed in the way she actually used some of the other statements made by Gandhi in his interview. Instead of giving an integrated and full account of Gandhi's statements on the topics she chose to quote Gandhi on, she truncated them and reproduced them in such a way as to make his position thoroughly ridiculous. For example, in Chapter 16 of *Mother India*, she first stated that a Hindu nobleman, instead of making any contribution to the uplift of his village, only blamed the British for the backwardness of his village. She then narrated how, in contrast to this, a Muslim nobleman, who was Commissioned Officer in the Army and was doing exceedingly well in his profession, resigned his commission and returned to his estate in the Punjab and let no stone unturned to better the conditions of the villages falling within his estate.[26]

Finally, she reproduced the following question she had put to Gandhi:

> Would not your educated and brilliant young men of India be doing better service to India, if, instead of fighting for political advantage, social place and, in general, the limelight, they were to efface themselves, go to the villages, and give their lives to the people?

To this question Gandhi was quoted as having replied: "Ah yes, but that is a counsel of perfection."[27] The statement ends there, as if Gandhi had no other answer than this foolish ejaculation of a politician. One has only to compare this laconic "reply" of Gandhi to what he had exactly said in the interview to see what a distorted version Mayo gave of it in her *Mother India*. The Mayo Collection has a copy of the full statement of Gandhi which shows that Gandhi, instead of replying to Mayo in a rather nonchalant way, had first

[26] Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (London, 1927), pp. 195-98. Hereafter this will be cited as *Mother India*.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

agreed with her suggestion and had then proceeded to explain what was the root cause of the unwillingness of the youth to go to the villages. He had criticised the English educational system which had "made us clerks or platform orators" and had never inculcated on the youth the virtue of serving the country by going to the villages. He had also told Mayo that despite this, there was a movement towards the villages although this movement was slow.[28] But nothing of all this appears in *Mother India.*

Similar was the fate of Gandhi's statement with regard to the spinning-wheel. In *Mother India,* he is reported to have said: "My message to America is the hum of this spinning-wheel."[29] The statement ends there, and the average American must have read this with some amusement. The fact is that Gandhi had considerably elaborated his point by explaining how the spinning-wheel symbolised nonviolence and non-exploitation and how it could help the Indians under the existing situation to better their lot by making them self-reliant. When Mayo pointed out that the spinning-wheel had disappeared from the West although it was a household tool in that part of the world only a few generations ago, Gandhi had explained that the people of the West had given it up by choice and had a substitute whereas in India the people had no substitute at all. Nothing of this long explanation appeared in *Mother India* except the terse and unintelligible—so it must have appeared to the Americans—sentence: "My message to America is the hum of this spinning-wheel." On the other hand, Mayo appended a rider to this statement by way of comment which must have conjured up various kinds of obscure images in the minds of many Americans. The rider is: "The wheel hums steadily on. And the thread it spins for America appears and reappears in the pages of the book."[30] Any type of interpretation could be put on this abrupt and vague statement.

So, when the book came out, Gandhi was sad. As so

[28] See Appendix I.
[29] *Mother India,* p. 201.
[30] *Ibid.*

correctly forecast by Mayo's countryman E. C. Carter, Gandhi apparently had not expected that this American lady, who had shown so keen a desire to meet him and to whom he had sent his amplified statement and a few other statements throwing light on the real condition of India, would finally come out with such a distorted version of what he had said.[31] "I am sorry to have to inform you that the book did not leave on my mind at all a nice impression", he painfully wrote to Mayo. He asked the publishers of Young *India* to send her a copy of his own review of the book entitled "A Drain Inspector's Report". But, as was characteristic of him, he was anxious that he should not do injustice to anybody. He told Mayo: "If you think that I have done any injustice to you [in the review] and if you care to draw my attention to it I shall feel thankful to you."[32]

But unfortunately these sincere words of Gandhi failed to make any impression on Mayo. On the other hand, Gandhi's review and other criticisms appear to have had the effect of stoking the fire of her anger, and she retired to England with her staff in search of more ammunition. We have already seen how anxious she was to get "A Gandhi story".[33] She did finally get a Gandhi story which was included in *Slaves of the Gods* under the title, "The Widow".[34] In this story, she narrated how two disciples of Gandhi were chased away by the common people of a village in Bengal who shouted at them that the British were in India to ensure peace and justice and that they would not care to replace the British with the disciples of Gandhi, who, in their view, were nothing but robbers. The fleeing Gandhi disciples then chanced on a solitary hut inhabited by a wretched Hindu widow, Sita, clad in a white sari. The Gandhi disciples asked her to part with that sari, her only clothing in the world, for Gandhi, about whom the ignorant widow knew anything at all, had

[31] For the forecast of E. C. Carter, see Supra, p. 55.
[32] Gandhi to Mayo, 13 September 1927, Mayo Collection, Box 9.
[33] Supra, p. 84.
[34] See Katherine Mayo, *Slaves of the Gods* (New York, 1929), pp. 109-20.

ordained that all Manchester clothes should be discarded and burnt. They further threatened that if she did not do this, she would be cursed with leprosy. In fact, leprosy, they proclaimed, was already on! Frightened, the poor widow threw away her sari, shut herself inside, and, out of shame at her nakedness and fear of the curse of leprosy, finally committed suicide.

This was the story narrated to Mayo by Cornelia Sorabji when she was sojourning in India during the winter of 1925-26.[25] Mayo's desire to paint Gandhi and his movement in the blackest possible colour was so intense and consuming that she did not stop to consider that this story, coming as it was from Cornelia Sorabji, might be untrue or at least prejudiced. Some British officials and their princely allies had acquainted Mayo's assistant in India (H. H. Field) with the events which had made Cornelia Sorabji so bitter against the Hindus.[26] In view of this, any impartial investigator would have taken a narration from Cornelia Sorabji with a pinch of salt. But nothing would deter Mayo from utilising any material which went against Gandhi, whatever the source of that material.

Mayo continued her tirade against Gandhi even after the publication of *Slaves of the Gods*. In 1930, Gandhi had come into limelight by his Dandi march and the salt satyagraha. The columns of such respectable and widely read newspapers as the *New York Times* were full of reports on Indian developments arising from the civil disobedience movement led by Gandhi. Gandhi had again emerged as an

[25] See Interview with Miss Sorabji, Calcutta, 2 March 1926, Mayo Collection, Box 55.

[26] Basil Blackett, Finance Member in the Government of India, told H. H. Field that Cornelia Sorabji was bitter because her mother was a low-caste Hindu. The Dewan of Datia, a small state in North India, confirmed this. He explained that Sorabji's father was a Parsee but that her mother was a low-caste Hindu, a Chamar. Her mother died when she was young, and she was brought up by the missionaries. "This", he said, "accounts for her harshness for her own people and for the orthodox Hindus' disdain for her." See H. H. Field's diary of 13 March and 14 March 1926, *ibid.*

important figure on the Indian scene. Mayo was out to destroy this image of Gandhi in America. She wrote a seven-page article in the *Atlantic Monthly* under the title, "Gandhi's March Past", in which she argued that Gandhi's mission was sedition and only sedition. She tried to show that while Gandhi was on his way to Dandi, small-pox was raging in the area he passed through, and that the epidemic was due to the contagion carried by his followers. She alleged that his Ashram was a small-pox pest centre on 12 March the day he started his march from the Ashram, and accused him of not doing anything to isolate his contagion-bearing followers and check the spread of small-pox in the area he passed through. She also mounted an attack on him for his alleged failure to dissuade the villagers from marrying off their child-daughters before the Sarda Act came into force.[37] Further, she charged him with neglect of Harijans, the untouchables, and said that in spite of all his self-proclaimed concern for them, he did nothing to help those untouchables who had been peacefully agitating for the right of entry into a temple at Nasik. Narrating this and complaining that the American reporters did not pay attention to these vital aspects of the Gandhi movement, she concluded:

> Thus ends the field review of Gandhi as a Hindu social reformer. Insanity, child marriage, untouchability—each his furious battle-cry in his years-long *wars of words;* each paraded before him, for action, in intense concrete form, during the first five weeks of his "final" campaign; each allowed to pass without one opposing effort recognizable as such by our many eager chroniclers who watch him day by day.[38]

Again, towards the end of 1931, when Gandhi, in the

[37] The Child Marriage Restraint Act popularly known as the Sarda Act was passed by the Indian Legislative Assembly in September 1929. The Act prohibited marriages of girls below the age of 14 years from 1 April 1930 onwards. (Harbilas Sarda was the mover of the Bill in the Indian Legislative Assembly.)

[38] Katherine Mayo, "Gandhi's March Past", *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston), vol. 146, September 1930, pp. 327-33. Emphasis added.

Second Round Table Conference in London, emphatically opposed the suggestion to give separate representation to the untouchables on the ground that, in his opinion, it would perpetuate their present status, Mayo found an opportunity to attack him. In a radio talk on 27 October 1931 broadcast throughout America under the title, "India", she described the position of the untouchables in the Hindu society, referred to the discussion going on in the London Round Table Conference, and said:

> And today the true relation between Gandhi and the untouchables is thereby suddenly unmasked—Gandhi, when not engaged in a political campaign, talks and writes and gestures like a democrat and a social reformer. But once a political campaign is on, his democracy and his social reform ideas blow away altogether, and you find him in fact the faithful lieutenant of the Hindu oligarch, the Hindu plutocrat, the Hindu slave-master.

She then told her listeners that the untouchables were happy at the attitude Gandhi had taken in the Conference since it had exploded the legend that he was the champion of the depressed classes.[39] She rather continually reiterated her charge that Gandhi's only counsel to the untouchables was "to submit humbly and quietly to the will of their Hindu masters".[40]

MAYO'S CONTINUED INTEREST IN INDIAN POLITICS

Apart from the fact that her literary activities regarding India were politically motivated, there were indications that Mayo did take a positive interest in Indian politics.

We have already noted how anxious the British officials in India were to see that her book on India was published in good time, i.e. before the appointment of the Statutory (Simon) Commission on India.[41] The Viceroy, finally, an-

[39] For the text of the broadcast, see Mayo Collection, Box 29.
[40] See "Is Gandhi Champion of the People?", Mayo Collection, Box 29.
[41] Supra, pp. 58-59.

nounced the personnel of the Commission on 8 November 1927. It was, however, a painful moment for him to find that not merely the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, but also the Liberal Federation of India led by Tej Bahadur Sapru had decided to boycott the Commission. The Muslim League was divided on this issue: one section, under Muhammad Shafi, was for a policy of cooperation, while another section, led by Jinnah, favoured the boycott of the Commission. The Viceroy was greatly concerned at this. He made a strong attempt to detach Jinnah from the course of action he had decided upon.[42]

Mayo, too, was greatly interested in this matter, and she even appears to have tried to prevail upon her Muslim friends in India to cooperate with the Commission. This is indicated by the letter written by her assistant H. H. Field to Khan Bahadur Jacob B. Israel of Bombay on 30 January 1928. In this letter Field informed the Khan Bahadur that Mayo had read his letter of 30 December 1927 with keen interest and thankfulness, and added:

> We are watching with interest the way the Muslims of India receive the Royal Commission which recently sailed from England, as it would appear to give every opportunity for your minority to express their desires.[43]

Mayo also kept up her contacts with her friends in the depressed classes in India. Her files contain a good number of leaflets issued by Bhagat Ram, Vice-President of the Audi Achhut (Depressed Classes) Sabha of Ferozepur (Punjab), hailing the publications of *Mother India, Slaves of the Gods,* and *Volume Two* and depicting Mayo as a "greater friend to depressed humanity...than all the saints and sages of India put together".[44]

[42] Earl of Birkenhead, *Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax* (London, 1965), pp. 242 and 249.

[43] Field to Khan Bahadur Jacob B. Israel (Bombay), 30 January 1928, Mayo Collection, Box 10.

[44] For these leaflets, see Mayo Collection, Boxes 29, 55, and 57. The lines quoted are from a leaflet, entitled "Miss Mayo's *Slaves of the Gods*: A Providential Help to the Helpless Here", Box 57.

Mayo's interest in Indian politics, especially in respect of the untouchables, appears to have been greatly roused during the Second Round Table Conference in London. Gandhi had emphatically declared himself against granting separate representation to the untouchables in the institutions of the Government which might emerge from the deliberations of the Conference. This, in the opinion of B. R. Ambedkar, the representative of the depressed classes in the Conference, was "nothing but a declaration of war" by Gandhi and the Congress against the untouchables.[45] He then sailed to the United States "to tell the Americans the story of his depressed people".[46] In India, a section of the depressed classes raised a hue and cry over the "wrong" that Gandhi had done them.

Mayo took upon herself the job of briefing Oswald Garrison Villard, the editor of *The Nation* and one of the foremost admirers of Gandhi and his cause in the United States, about B. R. Ambedkar, who was going to meet him. In a letter to Villard, she described Ambedkar as the spokesman of the depressed classes in India, and in proof of her assertion, she sent a handbill received by her that very day from India. This was a handbill issued by the Audi Achhut (Depressed Classes) Sabha of Ferozèpore (Punjab) reproducing the resolution passed by them expressing their confidence in B. R. Ambedkar as the spokesman of the depressed classes and approving what he had said in the Round Table Conference about separate representation for these classes. The resolutions had also denounced the attitude of Gandhi. Mayo informed Villard that the people of these depressed classes had never asked her for money. "...they have only begged that America might know their case, complaining that even in India they never get it stated in any (Indian-owned) paper, and are thereby cut off from the most effective chances of concerted action." Then she administered a piece of stern advice to Villard, appealing at the same time to his sympathy for the

[45] See Dhananjay Keer, *Dr Ambedkar: His Life and Mission* (Bombay, 1962), edn. 2, p. 173.
[46] *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 December 1931.

underdog and reminding him of his ancestry in this matter. She wrote:

> You must never go to India, unless you want to join that fight [of the Depressed Classes, for their rights against the caste Hindus]. Your grandfather's grandson *could not* stay out! And how they need you![47]

So this is how Mayo kept up her interest in Indian politics, maintained her contacts with the communalist Muslims and with those members of the depressed classes who were outside the main current of nationalist movement, and tried, in the name of these sections, to enlist the support of liberal journals like *The Nation* and others in her crusade against Gandhi and his followers.

THE DIFFERENTIAL BRITISH ATTITUDE

As we have already pointed out, *Mother India* was not the last word in Mayo's crusade against India. She came out with three more books in this series,[48] and on every occasion there was some discussion among the British authorities as to what attitude should be adopted towards these books. And not only that. Even when some other author published a book expanding on Islam or Hinduism, there would be discussion in the Department as to whether that particular book should be banned in view of the fact that *Mother India* had not been banned.

For example, when Messrs Hutchinson published a book entitled *Mohammed: A Biography of the Prophet and Man* in 1927, D. Petrie, Director of Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India, commented: "... perhaps in itself it is not so outrageously bad that there can be no two opinions

[47] Mayo to Villard, 16 December 1931, Villard Papers, Folder No. 2555. Villard had a great desire to visit India, but he could not make it. See his letter to S. K. Ratcliffe, 17 May 1935, *ibid.*, Folder No. 3167. Mayo's dramatic reference to "grandfather" here is to William Lloyd Garrison, grandfather of Oswald Garrison Villard. In the nineteenth century, William Lloyd Garrison was one of the leading figures in the anti-slavery movement.

[48] Supa, pp. 85-86.

on the question of prohibition..." Yet he noted: "The book, as it stands, is bound to give deep offence to Mahomedans, and will probably be gloated over by many Hindus."[49] He suggested that there was nothing to be lost if the book was prohibited. The Viceroy agreed with the suggestion and the book was prohibited by notification under the Sea Customs Act.[50]

It is appreciable that when the book was found to be offensive to the Muslims, it was prohibited. But the point to be noted is that the British authorities were so consumed with a desire to divide the Hindus and the Muslims that they did not apply the same principle in the case of *Mother India* which was definitely offensive to the Hindus. On the other hand, policeman J. H. Adam had advised Mayo to allow some Muslims to bring out an Urdu edition of the book even when he knew that they would use the book for communal purposes.[51]

Now, let us see what were the official considerations when Mayo's second book *Slaves of the Gods* was published in 1929. When it was announced that the publication of this book was imminent, the Viceroy in India felt that at that juncture, "another book from Miss Mayo might have very unfortunate consequences". So he telegraphically sought the advice of the Secretary of State for India in this matter.[52] The Secretary of State for India obtained an advance copy of the book, went through it, and telegraphically advised the Viceroy:

> There is a tendency in first two sketches to contrast Hinduism unfavourably with Islam and doubtless this will embitter criticism which book will evoke. All the same I am of opinion that it would be a great mistake to proscribe

[49] Note by D. Petrie. 4 October 1927. Home Department, Political. File No. 65/IX of 1927. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

[50] See Viceroy's notes, *ibid.*

[51] Supra. p. 83.

[52] Telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 9 March 1929. Home Department, Political, File No. 93 of 1929, National Archives of India.

> book. As pointed out in my previous telegram this will be entirely ineffective and will undoubtedly give rise to very damaging criticism that you are trying to save Hindus from unpalatable consequences of being told truth.

The Lord noted another important point for not proscribing the book:

> Book differs from *Mother India* in emphasising and quoting protest against socialism by Indians including Gandhi, Lajpat Rai, Gour, Krishnamurti, Mrs Reddi, Maharani of Baroda, Rani of Sangli.[53]

The book naturally was not proscribed. But the attitude of the British authorities needs to be noted: (1) the book should not be proscribed even if it hurt the feelings of the Hindus; (2) there was all the more reason for not proscribing the book, for it was likely to be damaging to the socialist movement in India.

Mayo's third book *Volume Two* was published in 1931. When its publication was imminent, even *Justice* of Madras, which was not particularly enamoured of the social practices among the caste Hindus of India, editorially commented: "At best the American spinster's third production can only produce repulsion in the minds of all who love truth."[54]

This time the Secretary of State for India, who belonged to the Labour Party, noted that "it might be worthwhile to consider whether as a gesture to appease possible Hindu resentment importation of this book should be prohibited under the Sea Customs Act".[55] Obviously, the Secretary had the Round Table Conference in mind. The first session of this Conference had been boycotted by the Indian National Congress. The second session was in the offing, and attempts were being made by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, to persuade Gandhi to attend it.

[53] Telegram, Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 21 March 1929, *ibid.*

[54] *Justice* (Madras), 21 February 1931.

[55] Telegram, Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 1 May 1931. Home Department, Political, File No. 29/6 of 1931, National Archives of India.

But the officers in the Home Department of the Government of India did not see eye to eye with the Secretary of State on this question. One of them commented: "It would be absurd to prohibit Miss Mayo's book as a gesture to Hindus, regardless of its merits."[56] He rejected the advice of another officer given earlier that pending scanning of the book in Delhi, the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, should be asked to detain any copy received there. When the book was received and examined in Delhi, an officer advised that any action to prevent the entry of the book into India would not appease Hindu sentiment and that it was inadvisable to take such action. He, however, held the opinion that the press in India be advised that the book contained no new materials so that when it reached India it may be still-born.[57] Even this was not acceptable to the senior officer in the Home Department. He took the plea that although there was anti-Hindu bias in the book, there could be no objection to the awakening of public conscience by a forceful presentation of the evils of a barbarous practice.[58] The Viceroy agreed with this view and, consequently, no action was taken. It was thus that the advice of the Secretary of State to consider the desirability of banning the book with a view to appeasing the Hindu sentiment in the political situation obtaining in India at that time went by the board.

It appears that Mayo had intended to visit India again in 1934 to prepare for the publication of her last book, *The Face of Mother India*. She had already received a large number of photographs from the India Office, the British Museum, and persons like J. Coatman, ex-Director of the Bureau of Public Information of the Government of India. When it was learnt that she intended to visit India, a question was tabled in the Legislative Assembly enquiring whether the government would disallow her entry. A draft reply prepared in the Home Department suggested that if Mayo

[56] Note dated 2 May 1931, *ibid.*
[57] Note dated 9 June 1931, *ibid.*
[58] Note dated 13 June 1931, *ibid.*

wished to come to India obstensibly to pursue inquiries similar to those which resulted in the publication of *Mother India*, the government might consider the desirability of stopping her in view of the resentment caused by that book.[59] But the Secretary of the Home Department refused to consider it desirable to stop Mayo from visiting India even if she desired to deal with the same subjects in her new book as were treated in *Mother India*. The Home Member agreed with this view.[60]

It would be interesting to contrast the infatuation of the British authorities with Mayo and her works to the hostile attitude they adopted towards those books which went in favour of the Indian nationalists. One such book was *India in Bondage* published in 1928. The author was Rev Jabez Sunderland, a countryman of Katherine Mayo.[61] The central theme of the book was that the British rule in India was unjust, that the Indians were abundantly competent to rule themselves and that America should certainly support the cause of Indian nationalism. The book appeared to be so seditious to the British authorities in India that it was not only proscribed, its publisher was arrested and proceeded against under the Indian Penal Code.[62]

Another book which aroused the ire of the British authorities was *The Case for India* (New York, 1930). The author

[59] Note by Deputy Secretary, 20 August 1934. Home Department, Political, File No. 22/36 of 1934, National Archives of India.

[60] Notes by the Secretary and the Home Member, 20 August 1934, *ibid.*

[61] Born in England, Rev Jabez Thomas Sunderland spent greater part of his life in the United States where he finally settled down. He spent several years in India so that he had occasion to observe Indian life from close quarters. When legal action was taken against *India in Bondage*, the New York weekly *The Nation* sarcastically noted that while *Mother India*, which through inaccuracies and insinuations had greatly hurt the feelings of the Indians, was allowed to circulate freely in India, *India in Bondage*, which was sympathetic to India's demand for independence, was proscribed. See *The Nation*, vol. 129, 17 July 1929, p. 55.

[62] Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of *Modern Review* (Calcutta) was the publisher of this book.

was William James Durant, another countryman of Katherine Mayo. The author held the view that no part of the world suffered so much poverty and oppression as India did and that this was largely due to British imperialism. He committed another gross crime in suggesting that American opinion should support the Indian nationalists! And so down came the heavy hand of the Government of India.[63]

Even such a seminal book as Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule* could not escape the wrath of the British authorities. As Gandhi himself said: "It was written in 1908 during my return voyage to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa."[64] The book made a strong plea that the Indians should eschew the method of violence and adopt the method of satyagraha to achieve self-rule. Yet the original book was proscribed by the Government of Bombay. What could be the reasons? The book certainly expounded the cause of Indian nationalism. Moreover, it strongly criticised certain aspects of European civilisation. So, while *Mother India* and other books of Katherine Mayo which had derided Indian nationalism and condemned Hinduism were gladly received by the British authorities, *Hind Swaraj* was suppressed. Moreover, it should be noted that, while the British authorities wholeheartedly collăborated with the American lady to denounce Indian nationalism in the eyes of the Americans, they struck down those respected American authors who urged the Americans to support the cause of Indian nationalism because they themselves were the children of a War of Independence. Such was the much eulogised British sense of justice and impartiality.

[63] For the treatment meted out to *The Case for India,* see India, *Legislative Assembly Debates.* session 2, 1931, vol. 5. pp. 667-68.

[64] *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad, Navajeevan Publishing House, 1958). p. 16.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters show what were the motives behind Mayo's venture in India and how and why British officials and public men collaborated with her. In our opinion, there is no doubt that the motives were primarily political: to discredit India and the Indian nationalist movement in international opinion, particularly American opinion; to win American support for the British cause in India; and to frighten even British liberals into giving up the constitutional reforms they had envisaged for India.[1] The prospect of the Labour Party, supposed to be sympathetic to the nationalist cause of India, coming to power in England seems to have prompted Conservative elements to rally their forces and do the best they could to prove that India and the Indians were unfit for any measure of self-government.

The first chapter of this monograph shows how anxious the British masters of India were to win American opinion in their favour and how cleverly they tried to employ American journalists, publicists and propaganda men to do the work which would serve the British interest. As early as 1920, they had been on the look-out for an American lady journalist who could come to India and do their dirty work![2]

That Katherine Mayo would be a competent person to do this type of work should have naturally occurred to British officials and public men. They had noted that she had set up an organisation to promote cordiality between England

[1] Supra, pp. 54-59.
[2] Supra, p. 11.

and America. And what better proof of her competence in the matter could there be than *The Isles of Fear?* This American woman was the publicist who answered all their specifications.[3]

Katherine Mayo certainly did not disappoint them. They burst with joy at the publication of the book.[4] Rushbrook Williams, who, as propaganda man of the Government of India, had undertaken tours of the United States to explore ways and means of creating pro-British opinion there, declared with satisfaction that "'Mother India' is likely to mark a turning-point in educated American thought."[5] This was corroborated by the New York journal *The Outlook* when it pointed out that the book was likely to succeed in undoing much of the work done towards creating sympathy between India and America.[6] And years later, A. M. Rosenthal correctly noted:

> There are few people more important in the relationship between India and the United States than Katherine Mayo, few books, if any, that contributed more violent coloring to the American mental image of India than "Mother India".[7]

But the story of the effect of *Mother India* does not end here. It is interesting to scan the columns of the important Indian journals subsequent to the publication of *Mother India.* Incidents, big and small, of Negro lynching, moral deviations, sexual aberrations and other forms of corruption in the social and political life of the United States were grabbed at by these journals and amplified, and editorials ran under such headings as: "Pot Calls the Kettle Black", "Glass Houses and Stone Throwing", etc.[8] In fact, a whole book—

[3] Supra, pp. 19-20.
[4] Supra, pp. 59-61.
[5] *Asiatic Review* (London), vol. 23, 23 October 1927, p. 688.
[6] *The Outlook*, vol. 147, 16 November 1927, p. 148.
[7] A. M. Rosenthal, "'Mother India' Thirty Years After", *Foreign Affairs* (New York, N.Y.), vol. 35, July 1957, p. 621.
[8] *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 11 August 1927, p. 4; and 24 December 1927, p. 4.

outdoing even Mayo—was written on these themes under a scintillating heading: *Uncle Sham: Being the Strange Tale of a Civilization Run Amok.*[9] To add to this, there were suggestions that American goods should be boycotted in India as a fitting reply to Mayo.[10]

Even more violent than this was the Indian reaction against the British. Hundreds of meetings were held in India protesting against the publication of *Mother India* and accusing British officials of nefarious plots against India. "If she wanted to produce estrangement between Great Britain and India, she could not have done better than produce *Mother India*", was the opinion of the Indian liberal leader, C. S. Ranga Iyer, a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly.[11]

And the worst was that in the countries of the West the perverted image of India was generalised as the image of the whole East.[12] And in India, too, anti-American or anti-British feelings generated by the book tended to take on the dimensions of anti-Western attitude.[13] Naturally, who could have been happier than the bard who sang:

> Oh, East is East, and West is West,
> and never the twain shall meet...

[9] Kanhaya Lal Gauba, *Uncle Sham: Being the Strange Tale of a Civilization Run Amok* (Lahore, 1929). The author claimed that within three months the book had to undergo three editions. K. M. Panikkar, then Foreign Minister of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, thus commented on the book. "I was unable to read through *Uncle Sham* till to-day as it was snatched from my hands the moment it was delivered by the postman. *Uncle Sham* is indeed an achievement. It is the most scathing exposure of America I have read. It tears the stars, pangled banner to shreds... I do hope you will arrange for the translation of your book into French and German. It deserves to have a world-wide circulation." *Ibid.*, Appendices, p. (i).

[10] See *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 16 March 1928, p. 9.

[11] C. S. Ranga Iyer, *Father India: A Reply to "Mother India"* (London, 1928), p. 14.

[12] See Supra, p. 77.

[13] See, for example, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 August 1927, p. 4; 23 September 1927, p. 4; and 28 October 1927, p. 4.

Appendix I

INTERVIEW WITH MR GANDHI, 17 MARCH 1926

My message to America is simply the hum of this wheel. Letters and newspaper cuttings I get from America show that one set of people overrates the results of nonviolent noncooperation and the other not only underrates it but imputes all kinds of motives to those who are concerned with the movement. Don't exaggerate one way or the other. If therefore some earnest Americans will study the movement impartially and patiently then it is likely that the United States may know something of the movement which I do consider to be unique although I am the author of it. What I mean is that our movement is summed up in the spinning-wheel with all its implications. It is to me a substitute for gun-power. For, it brings the message of self-reliance and hope to the millions of India. And when they are really awakened they would not need to lift their little finger in order to regain their freedom. The message of the spinning-wheel is: really to replace the spirit of exploitation by the spirit of service. The dominant note in the West is the note of exploitation. I have no desire that my country should copy that spirit or follow that note.

(*As to the effects of multiplication of means of travel and transportation.*)

All that is coming to smother us, not to deliver us. I can only say I hope that we shall be spared that affliction. But it may be we shall have to drink the bitter cup. If we do not learn by the experience of the West, we may have to drink it. But

Mayo Collecion, Box 8.

I am leaving no stone unturned to avoid that catastrophe. The powers of the West, however much they have fought amongst themselves, have agreed on this: "Let us exploit the other nations—Asia and Africa." They are keeping up to that agreement with extraordinary accuraccy. Suppose we reciprocate. Suppose we learn all the tricks of our Western teachers—what will happen? A mightier copy of what happened in August 1914. It will come if Europe and America continue to say: "We shall be top dogs and you others shall be bottom dogs", and we do not learn the message of nonviolence and understand that we have but to cease to buy from you what we do not need. Therefore in spite of all evidence to the contrary, I do my best not to cooperate with that spirit of exploitation. I decline to copy even though I am but one in three hundred millions. At least I shall die with the satisfaction of knowing I die in doing what my conscience directs.

We can be exploited only with our own consent, whether forced or willing, conscious or unconscious, and only if we buy all sorts of attractive things that Europe and America produce—mainly clothing. This we can avoid because we have not yet quite lost the cunning of our hands. The task of so providing for our needs will prove no burden but can be met just as we eat and drink—a little at a time in the course of each day, during spare hours. There are many things today for which I am dependent on the West. When I am sure that I take only what is better done there and what is beneficent to me, it will be an honourable, free and mutually advantageous bargain. But what is now done is a bargain destructive to both sides. For exploitation is as bad for one as for the other.

I want this country to be spared Dyerism. That is I do not want my country, when it has the power, to resort to frightfulness in order to impose her customs on others. Very often we have to learn by hard experience, but if I believe that every one of us had to go in a vicious circle and do just what every other has done, I should know that no progress is possible and should preach the doctrine of suicide. But we hope, and train our children in the hope that they will avoid the mistake of their fathers. Indeed I see signs, very faint, but unmistakable,

of a better day in the West. A tremendous movement is going on in the West today to retrace steps. There is much progress in the thought world, although little is as yet translated into action. But what the thinkers are thinking today tomorrow will be action.

I have almost daily visits from Americans, not in idle curiosity. Not in the spirit of "let us see this animal in Indian zoo"; but from real interest to know my idea. Those who see the poverty of India and feel grieved should probe under the surface and find its real cause. It is not as if it were slowly decreasing. It is growing, in spite of hospitals, schools, metalled roads and railways. In spite of all these you find the people are being ground down as between two millstones. They live in enforced idleness. A century ago every cottage was able to replenish its resources by means of the spinning-wheel. Now every farmer, scratching the earth only a few inches deep with his wooden plough, works in the season of cultivation. But he cannot do much work in the other seasons of the year. What is he, his children and his women then to do? The women sat at the wheel in the old days and sang something not obscene—not trash—but a song to the Maker of us all. The children imbibed it and so this custom was handed down and the children had it, although they were without polish or literary education. But now it has all but died away. The mother is groaning under poverty, her spirit is darkened. She has no milk. As soon as the child is weaned, she has only gruel to give it, that ruins the intestines.

What am I to ask these millions to do? To migrate from their farms? To kill off their babies? Or shall I give them what occupation I can, to relieve their lot?

I take to them the gospel of hope—the spinning-wheel—saying: "I do this thing myself, side by side with you, and I give you coppers for your yarn. I take your yarn that you have spun in your own place, in your own time, at your own sweet will." She listens with a little bit of hope in her eyes. At the end of five weeks during which she has had help and cooperation regularly, I find light in her eyes. "Now", she says, "I shall be able to get milk for my baby." Then if she can have this

work regularly she reestablishes a happy home. Multiply that scene by three hundred millions and you have a fair picture of what I am hoping.

The testimony of the English historian (official) Sir william Hunter first showed that the poverty of the masses is growing rather than decreasing. The villages I have visited show it. The East India Company records show it. In those days we were exporters not exploiters. We delivered our goods faithfully. We had no gun-boats to send for punishing those who would not buy our goods. We sent out the most wonderful fabrics the world has produced. We exported diamonds, gold, spices. We had our fair share of iron ore. We had indigenous and unfadable dyes. All that is now gone. Not to speak of Dacca muslin, which was mistaken for dew. I can't produce it today, but I hope to.

The East India Company came to buy, and remained to sell. It compelled us to cut off our thumbs. They stood over us and made us behave against our wills till thousands of us cut our thumbs. This is no figment of my imagination but can be verified by the records of the East India Company. Do I lay the blame to the [sic.] Britain? Certainly I do! By means the foulest imaginable our trade was captured and then killed by them in order to make a market for their own goods. For suppose I am tired of work—tired as we were tired till we cut off our thumbs to avoid being driven farther—is not that the pressure of the bayonet? This is the history of how our skill was lost.

You say that the spinning-wheel, a few generations ago a household tool in the West, has there also disappeared. But they of the West who spun and spin no more were free men and gave it up by choice. They had a substitute for the spinning-wheel. Here we have no substitute even now for the millions. If an Indian farmer wants to set up a soap factory or a basket factory, can he do it? Where can he sell his produce? But I am trying to induce the people to understand the secret of the wheel. Compulsion that comes from within is different from that which is superimposed upon you. I would

teach my people to resist that outer compulsion, to the point of death.

There is difficulty in now reviving the art of spinning because the people have lost their liking for it. It is difficult to teach the habit to work to a people who have lost all hope and who have done no work for years and years. And our rich men think that they can redress all the wrongs they have done in amassing their riches by throwing a handful of rice in the faces of the poor. Whereby they only spoil them so that if I go afterwards with cotton in one hand and coppers in the other I suffer in consequences. And I can bring no force to bear. I have no power of government at my back to compel them. So my task goes slowly. I have to plod. Yet thousands spin today who did not spin last year. My success when it comes will lead to the development of other home industries and in the meantime the central difficulty will be solved because the vast mass of our troubles proceeds from enforced idleness.

Untouchability can be cured by those who understand being true to themselves. You saw the squabble that arose in the Hindu Mahasabha. But untouchability is going in spite of all opposition, and going fast. It has degraded Indian humanity. The "untouchables" are treated as if less than beasts. Their very shadow defiles in the name of God. I am as strong or stronger in denouncing untouchability as I am in denouncing British methods imposed on India. Untouchability for me is more insufferable than British rule. If Hinduism hugs untouchability, then Hinduism is dead and gone, in spite of the lofty message of the Upanishads and the Gita—as pure as crystal. But what is the teaching worth if their practice denies it.

(Would not the young men be doing better service to the country if, instead of fighting for political advantage, they effaced themselves, went to the villages, and gave their lives to the people?)

Surely. But that is a counsel of perfection. All the teaching that we have received in the Universities has made us clerks or platform orators. I never heard the word spinning-wheel in all my school days. I never had any teacher, Indian or English,

who taught me to go to the villages. All their teaching was to aspire to government positions. To them the I.C.S. was almost a heaven born thing, and the height of worldy ambition was to become a member of the Council. Even today I am told I must go to the Council, to tell the government the needs of the people and debate them on the floor of the House. No one says—"Go to the villages." That movement has come in spite of the contrary teaching in schools. Our young people have become dis-Indianised. They are unaccustomed to the life of the villages. There you have to live in unsanitary conditions. If you won't take the spade and shovel in your own hands, you will die a miserable death from dirt and infection. I have lost some of my workers because of malaria although they knew the laws of health. The movement towards the villages has come but it is slow.

My desire is to destroy the present system of government but not to drive away the British people. I do not mean to say that the British meant to do me harm. But self-deception is the most horrible crime of which human nature is capable. And the bayonet of the old days yet remains in some shape. I have rechristened it Dyerism. And I would like to see the British utterly gone except as he remains as India's employee, in India's pay. For this he might as well be a Frenchman, a German, or a Chinaman. The Briton has admirable qualities—because he is a human being. I would say the same of an Arab or a negro from South Africa.

Am I not afraid, once the British have gone, of internecine strife? Of the hordes of Afghanistan? Yes, but these are possibilities that I would welcome. We are fighting today, but fighting in our hearts. The daggers are simply concealed. When the Wars of the Roses were going on, if the European powers had intervened to impose peace, where would Britain be today?

Appendix II

ASHRAM
Sabarmati, 26-3-26.

Dear Friend,

I was glad to receive your letter before you left and gladder still to see that you propose to verify for yourself the statement I made and then come to a judgment. That is precisely what I want American friends to do. To take nothing for granted, challenge every statement whether it comes from Indian source or European source and whether the persons are anti-Indian or pro-Indian, then come to a deliberate conclusion and act upon it.

I send you herewith the quotations* from the books whose names you will find at the end of the quotations. If you still have any difficulty in getting hold of the books from which the quotations have been taken, do please let me know. I would want to add also that the statement about poverty of India does not rest merely upon the testimony of the late Sir William Wilson Hunter but it has been confirmed by subsequent observations made both by Indians and Europeans. If you want this information also substantiated by me, I shall be pleased to send you proofs. I also suggest to you a method that even a man in the street may also adopt for verification.

1. Is it or is it not true that nearly 80 per cent of the population of India is agricultural and living in remote villages

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

* The quotations, omitted here, were from W. W. Hunter, William Digby, and Romesh Chunder Dutt.

scattered over an area of 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad?

2. Is it or is it not true that these peasants are living in small holdings and often as serfs of big zamindars?

3. Is it or is it not true that the vast majority of them have at least four idle months in the year?

4. Is it or is it not true that before the British rule these very people had hand-spinning as an industry ancillary to agriculture which supplemented the slender income they had from agriculture?

5. Is it or is it not true that whilst hand-spinning has been entirely killed no other industry has taken its place?

If the answer to all these questions be in the affirmative no matter what statements might be made by anybody, these agriculturists must be poorer than they were before hand-spinning was destroyed. There are many other causes for the growing poverty of the masses but those that are implied in the question are, I think, enough for the ordinary enquirer. I have suggested this line of enquiry to you so as to enable you to test the tragic truth of India's growing poverty in many ways.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Appendix III

THE GOVERNOR OF
FORT WILLIAM IN
BENGAL

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
CALCUTTA
Feb. 10, 1926

Dear Miss Mayo,

I am so glad to hear that you are coming to Calcutta and I hope you and Miss Newell will come and stay here with us for a few days from Feb. 22nd. I shall unfortunately be away when you arrive. We are leaving tomorrow morning for Agra, Alwar and Delhi and shall not be back till the 20th when we go out to Barrackpure till Monday the 22nd. We return to Calcutta on Monday the 22nd. We should be very glad if you and your friend would come and stay with us here. Both my private secretary and my military secretary will be away with us on tour but I have asked Mr Lay, the American Consul-General, to introduce you to Mr Birley, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bengal, and Sir Charles Tegart, the Chief Commissioner of the Calcutta police. Both these gentlemen will give you valuable information and I have spoken to them about you. Mr Lay has promised to get me a copy of the *Isles of Fear* and I hope it may arrive in time for me to read before you arrive. I am much looking forward to making your acquaintance and having some talks with you.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,
LYTTON

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

Appendix IV

TELEGRAMS
CLUB, SIMLA

UNITED SERVICE CLUB
SIMLA
30.6.27

Dear Miss Mayo,

I was delighted to hear from you and still more overjoyed when I heard your book was actually on its way to me. It has since turned up safely and I have only had time to just glance at it. I will let you know frankly what I think about it when I have read it. I am proud of the privilege of being of recipient of one of the four copies sent to India.

I cannot somehow picture you "cowering in a corner awaiting my verdict" !!

I am glad the book is out now as it will show an important side of affairs which has never been really understood or considered by our reformers. I met in Delhi a Mrs Michael Pym, of the N.Y. Herald Tribune. Do you know anything about her? I think she may write some sense about India but I am not sure. I should like to see more of her because I feel that American support in the right direction is all important at present, Borah did a lot of harm in 1917. However, more on this subject later. This is just to thank you for the book and convey my respects to yourself and to Miss Newell.

Yours ever,
J. H. Adam

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

Appendix V

BUREAU OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
HOME DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

24/2/26

Dear Miss Mayo,

Very many thanks for your letter of the 15th. My delay in replying is due to the fact that I could not get the information in Delhi which you want, about the obscene posters. The evidence before the Hunter Committee was taken in Camera & is all in Simla. As soon as I get up there at the beginning of April, I will get it out and send the information to you in America.

I am very grateful to you for your promise to write to the Editor of the New York Times. The Editor of the Atlantic Monthly has sent me a very enthusiastic letter about my article for him and wants more from me. It is a great honour to write for such a famous review.

I have heard nothing yet of Field but am looking out for him. It is becoming very hot here and I hope he will not delay his visit too long as he will be hindered in his travels by the exigencies of the climate.

I find that lots of people have read & appreciated your books and what you say about India is being eagerly waited.

It is good to hear that you are having such an interesting time and you are certainly making good use of it.

With all best wishes to you & Miss Newell.

I shall certainly come to the States at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,
J. COATMAN

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

Appendix VI

BUREAU OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
HOME DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA 11/3/26

Dear Miss Mayo,

Very many thanks for your letter of March 5th. I am very grateful to you for writing to the Editor of the N.Y. Times and hope that I shall have an opportunity of doing some work for him.

Field had turned up and is busily engaged in collecting information. He has seen many of the big people & Thompson has arranged for him to visit one of the out of the way States where he will certainly see something which will interest him very much. I am glad to have met him but it is very sad that all you good people are mere birds of passage through Delhi. However, we shall have the pleasure of reading your book which I know will be a good one.

I gave a copy of the Rowlatt Commission Report to Field, much against the will of my Office Superintendent, as it is getting rare now. So it will be available with him. But if you must have one in your own possession, I will hunt one up in Simla and send it to you.

I had a most cordial letter from Elley Sedgwick who approves very highly of the article which I wrote for him on Hindu-Mohammedan relations. He intends to ask me to write again for him which I consider a very great honour as the A.M.

Mayo Collection, Box 51.

[*Atlantic Monthly*] is distinctly one of the journals which confer a cachet on those who write for it.

I enclose a note by the Director of Agriculture which will give you the latest information on the subject of cattle in this country.

It is a pity that you cannot take Delhi in your journey down to the coast, but we must look forward to another meeting in the happy future.

With all good wishes to you & Miss Newell.

Yours sincerely,
J. Coatman

The total no. of cattle (including
buffaloes) in India is estimated at 179,170,000.

Appendix VII

No: 57

PRIVATE SECRETARY'S OFFICE
PUNJAB

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
LAHORE
7th January 1926

Dear Miss Mayo,

I am sending you a copy of "A Vision of India". His Excellency recommends specially your reading chapters 13 and 20.

Reference tomorrow's plans, if convenient to you, I have arranged with Col. Walker that you should see the Veterinary College between 8.30 to 9 A.M. If you can arrive there between this time he will meet you and show you round. Colonel Gill, Director of Public Health, will be pleased to see you in his office at 11 A.M. His office is in the Punjab Civil Secretariat. He will be very pleased also if you can dine with him tomorrow night and continue in a conversation which is left unfinished in the morning. I understand that he has a Health Representative of the League of Nations staying with him just now. The above engagements with Sir George Anderson's lecture will probably be enough for tomorrow. This will leave the Lahore Medical College and an interview with S. Hari Singh with reference to Criminal Tribes. You will probably be able to fit both these in on Saturday before leaving for Lyallpur. I am now writing to Mr Garbett, the Deputy Commissioner of Attock.

To

Miss Mayo,
Faletti's Hotel,
Lahore.

Yours sincerely,
For Private Secretary

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

Appendix VIII

GOVERNOR OF
PUNJAB

GOVERNOR'S CAMP, PUNJAB,
INDIA
March 15th, 1926

Dear Miss Mayo,

I am afraid I have not answered yet your letter of the 15th of February. I am very glad that you managed to see so much of the Punjab, and am interested in what you say about Delhi. I would, however, like to repeat to you what I said before, that important as political advance in India may be, the real work is at the moment being done in the districts. Would you kindly let me know if there is any further material I can send you, or help you in any way?

I am,
Yours sincerely,

Miss Katherine Mayo,
C/o. Messrs, Thos. Cook & Son,
Bombay.

Mayo Collection, Box 8.

Appendix IX

FOREIGN AND POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
INDIA

Simla, 12th August 1926

Dear Miss Mayo,

In your letter of the 21st of June you asked me how authority is delegated in Indian States with regard to religion and race. You refer specially to the more important public office and the State Military Forces.

It would certainly be unsafe to say that Rulers generally entrust their highest interests of men to different religion or race from themselves. They generally show a preference for their own subjects and in some States the prejudice is very strong. On the other hand in quite a number of the larger States you will find important—sometimes the most important—offices held by men of different religion from the Ruler. To the instance you have cited I might add those of Kashmir, Patiala, Gwalior, Bhopal and Kapurthala. Perhaps I need not say that I am not here referring to appointments held by Englishmen.

The reasons for the appointment of outsiders or men of a different religion are various, but those which carry the greatest weight are probably the absence of local talent and the desire to counter-balance and check local interests and intrigue.

As regards the Military Forces of States, much the same applies. Most Rulers prefer to recruit local men and the Government of India encourage them to do so. There are a number

Mayo Collection, Box 7.

of Gurkhas among the Kashmir troops and you have referred to the Arab troops at Hyderabad. The Arab connection with Hyderabad dates, I believe, from very early days prior to the establishment of the present dynasty. The Arab troops of Hyderabad are mostly immigrants or descended from immigrants from Zanzibar and the Arab settlements in Africa. Some possibly have been brought back from Arabia itself by Hyderabad nobles returning after performing the pilgrimage to the Holy places. As regards Hyderabad however it is as well to remember that the Ruling Family is descended from a great noble of the Mogul Empire, who was a stranger and a foreigner in the Deccan, and that the Family rules over a tract of country which is ethnographically purely Hindu. It is not therefore unnatural that the Nizam should wish to surround himself with guards of his own faith. Apart from these two cases I cannot at present recall any other case in which a State of set policy recruits what may be described as real foreigners.

I was very much interested to hear of the progress of your work and shall look forward to the resultant book. I am glad that you took me at my word and did not hesitate to make further enquiries where you thought I might be able to help.

My wife went Home last March and returns with our elder daughter in November. I have given her your message.

Please remember me to Miss Newell. I hope you are both in the best of health.

Yours sincerely,
J. P. Thompson

Appendix X

CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST
CENTRAL OFFICE

BRIDGE STREET,
WESTMINSTER. S.W. 1.
22nd December, 1927

Dear Captain Field,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 9th December, which I have read with interest. I note that Mr Woolacott's booklet is not suitable for the U.S.A. but you yourself may find it of some value as a short and unassailable statement of facts. I send you three extra copies with pleasure and if you want any more please let me know.

I am very interested in what you write about Miss Mayo's journalistic activities, present and to come, in connection with India and if at any time you care to send me copies of her articles, I shall be glad to have them. The violent controversy which "Mother India" has created is still in more or less active being. A stupid reply has been written under the title of "Father India" by a Madrassi Brahmin, C. S. Ranga Iyer, which doubtless you have seen.

Miss Mayo's book has sunk deep and carried far. The full effect of it will never be calculable but certainly no book on India has ever had such a tremendous influence, which cannot fail to be for good, on the social and political conditions which are so inextricably interwoven in that country.

With kind regards and all the best wishes of the season,

Capt. H. Field,
Bedford Hills,
New York, U.S.A.

Yours sincerely,
DUDLEY B. MYERS

Mayo Collection, Box 10.

INDEX